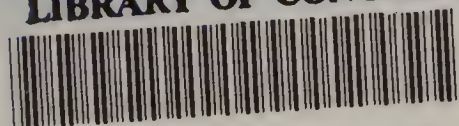


# THE ANGELUS OF SUNSET HILL



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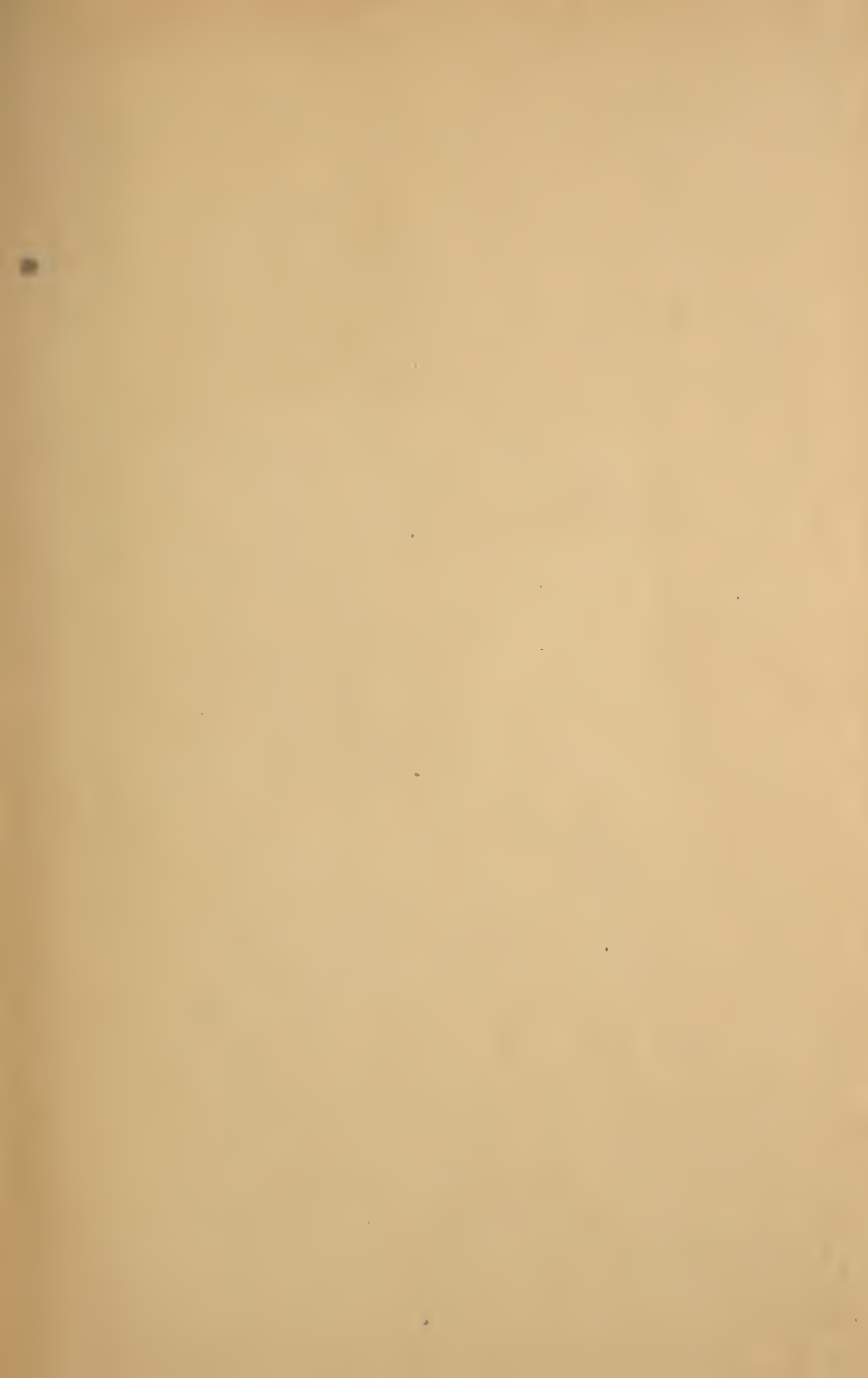


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*The Angelus of Sunset Hill*



BY EMMET C. MAY

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*A Vision of Life Insurance*

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# *The Angelus of Sunset Hill*

By  
EMMET C. MAY



PEORIA, ILLINOIS  
1924

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W. F. HALL PRINTING COMPANY, CHICAGO

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no 1



*To My Mother*



# The Angelus of Sunset Hill

## CHAPTER I

ALL day John had been watching the coming and going of people along the Appian Way. From the Court in which he lay he could see in the distance the great Dome of St. Peter's; further along he could see St. Paul's Church; out to the east he could see the Tomb of Cecelia Metella; and further away the Sabine Hills, in all their peacefulness. He knew that within the range of his vision there lay buried the greatest of ancient cities, much of which has not been uncovered; and also there lay beneath it all the greatest city of the dead.

He had in his imagination set himself back two thousand years and fancied himself in Roman times. He had gazed along this ancient way and wondered how in these ancient times they had contrived to build so well. He thought of Nero going along this very same road on his way to his villa at the ocean side and could see the servants scattering along the road the gold dust, over which this haughty individual decreed he must ride; and of the twenty thousand attendants who must accompany him to his villa to see that he was properly cared for and entertained. He thought of the suffering that this tyrant had occasioned, and he tried to picture in his own mind how the Christians had fled along this very way just at the beginning of their faith; that they had hidden themselves along this road, and that here and there they had dug into the ground like wild animals and made for themselves a hiding place which later on became not only a hiding place but home, and church, and tomb. He knew



the very house in which he lived was over one of the Catacombs. Just down there close to the gate of the city St. Paul was beheaded. He liked to believe the tradition that not far from where he then sat, Christ himself had appeared to St. Peter and caused him to turn back into Rome, there to be the foundation and head of the Church.

As he lay there in his day-dream, it suddenly occurred to him that the Italian sky was that day unusually beautiful and somehow it took him back through the years—back along the pathway of his life—clear back to his mother's knee. Then he realized that this sky at which he was gazing, and the sunshine which was restoring health to him, was an exact duplicate of a day in his youth—a day such as one occasionally sees in the mountains of eastern Kentucky. His memory on that day was full of the things of youth; the sky, the fleecy clouds floating lazily against the blue background, the friends of his youth, and mother. Ah yes! There was mother! And such a mother! Such an influence for good on his life! How her arms had protected and comforted him! Such sleep as he had had when with a lullaby she had rocked him in the twilight. Such advice and counsel she had given him, all of which had stayed with him to this very day as a part of his very nature. It was she who had molded his nature, making him realize that in this life it is only people that count; that our lives are worth just what we make of them and that the more we can influence and make better the lives of others, the more good we are doing. She was not a reformer. She was not a charity worker. But she was a wonderful mother with common-sense and a great desire to raise a good boy.

And then he remembered that awful day late in the autumn, just about this time when through the window he had seen armed men stealing up close to the house; had seen the excitement of his father and brothers as they made ready to defend themselves as their ancestors had done in the feud for generation after generation; had

found himself, although only ten years old, with a rifle in his hands doing his bit; and this dear old mother had taken him with her to the basement of the house and held him there until the crash of the burning timbers snuffed out her life and left him stunned and suffocating. "Ah yes, dear mother, that was a sad day for us both!" He remembered the grave under the great oak tree on Sunset Hill, with the simple headstone "Mother." And to think that today here he was thousands of miles away on a beautiful Italian day, which was so like a Kentucky day of his youth, that it carried him back and back and made him think and think—

"Well, old day-dreamer, a penny for your thoughts!"

"Nell, I wouldn't sell them for King Solomon's riches."

"They must have been very interesting and entertaining, then. The way you have been lying there gazing and dreaming, one would think that you had loads and loads on your mind. Tell me, I pray you, did I have any place in all this train of thoughts, or was it of the terrible war that gave you the past months of suffering and struggle for life?"

"Yes, Nell, you had your place. It was a dream of youth—our youth—with all its pleasures and all its sorrows. I am unable to decide which are the most valuable, the pleasures or the sorrows, but I am fully decided which memories hurt the most. The sorrows emphasize the pleasures and make them sweeter. What would we do were it not for our memories? They fix standards for us; they make goals to be reached; they spur us on to accomplishments; they are the storehouses of the past from which we can draw materials to be secured no other place in the world. Do you remember our childhood as vividly as I do, I wonder? We are not so very old, but it seems to me ages have been crowded into our lives, into my life anyway. This is a wonderful place to think. It just seems to me that the very surroundings here, where everything is so old and musty, sharpens one's memory and imagination, and especially does it bring back the

memories of youth. I remember the poem we used to read about—‘Of all the beautiful pictures that hang on memory’s wall, etc.’ Remember that, Nell?”

“Here! Here! Who gave you permission to get into such a mood as this? I do believe that you are growing old. You just hustle yourself into the house and get dressed for dinner. Aunt Fannie is all in a flutter tonight. She is so afraid that she will forget something in the packing and that she will not get the things out of here in time to get the boat at Naples tomorrow night. So you just shoo yourself out of here and don’t delay things. You’ll have plenty of time on the boat to do some more day-dreaming.”

For weeks John Adams had been slowly coming back to life in the sunshine of Italy as he had enjoyed the hospitality of Nell Henderson’s villa at the edge of Rome and on the very beginning of the Appian Way. He had been brought there from the hospital in France as soon as he could be moved. He was one of the great host of casualties of the Great War. His sector was Verdun—terrible Verdun.

John realized as he went into the house that he had not been day-dreaming altogether, but that he had in fact reviewed almost all of his life. He realized also that he was going back home. There is a thrill that comes to a man when he realizes that he is going back to the place of his birth and childhood, that comes in no other way. We may travel from one country to another and from one state to another with nothing more than the realization that we are seeing new scenery and perhaps an entirely new country to us. All this does not bring to us the sensation which comes when we realize that we are going back home. The thoughts turn homeward; the memories are aroused; green spots are perhaps watered with tears; the heart quickens and does its part to give us the thrill that is peculiar only to the occasion. And John was going back home—was going with Nell, which made the situation all the more thrilling to him.



## CHAPTER II

“**U**NCLE DAVE, look at Nigger Sam comin’ down the road. He shore is tall. He could stand knee deep in Hell and shake hands with Abraham in Isaac’s bosom, couldn’t he?”

“What am I going to do with you, young man? What kind of talk is that for a boy to be using? Now don’t let me hear any more of it. You are getting to be a regular rough-neck. They will be calling you a backwoodsman pretty soon. If Sam is tall the good Lord made him that way, he can’t help it, and you shouldn’t be talking so irreverently of the Lord’s work.”

John Adams was twelve years old. Dave Daniels was a man of fifty. He had been a preacher in the hills for many a year and much was the good he had done in those many years of work. He had seen many a young man grow up and take his place in the community, a good influence or a bad one, “according to how the twig had been bent,” as he used to say. He had always been an influence for good wherever he had been. He had been called to homes of sorrow and had given of his comfort and words of cheer. He had seen strong men engage in deadly combat to the extinction of one or both of them. Such was the influence of the feuds. He had seen great gatherings at his meetings and had seen the sincerity of the mountain people whose sense of right and wrong is so pronounced. He had lived among these people and knew them and their ways as he knew his prayers. He knew all of them personally and knew their very thoughts and desires. Dave was a man loved and respected by all.

He was tall, lean, and in his younger days had been a powerful man. He was still sound of limb and strong and healthy. His hair was white, and worn just long

enough that it gave him a distinguished and refined appearance. He was a very sympathetic man. While all the people claimed him as a friend and welcomed him gladly to their homes, he was the true and valued friend of the young folks. When their love affairs entangled their thoughts, it was to Dave they turned for advice. And be it said to his everlasting credit that never did he refuse the best of his advice. To help and to direct the young folks was the greatest pleasure of his life. He was both companion and friend to all of them. No matter what the family differences, no matter who were enemies, in the presence of Dave all enmities were forgotten. Maybe the feeling was still there, but there never was an expression or a quarrelsome word in his presence. It was said of him that he was the only man in all the mountains who could claim everyone as his friend. And surely he was the only man who could bring together friend and foe without a conflict. It was a kind of an unwritten law that in the presence of Dave there must be no hostilities. When he called them together, they must stand united for whatever he wanted to accomplish. He loved the Kentucky hills. And so does every native. There is a loyalty to native heath than which there is no stronger example in all the world. It is said that in all mountainous countries, the people have more imagination and more sentiment and more true loyalty to native country than any other people. Whether this be true or not, there can be no question about the sincere reverence of the eastern Kentucky people for their hills.

And it was in this kind of a surrounding and among this kind of people that John Adams grew to manhood. For only ten years did he have the influence of a good mother. As far back as the memory of the oldest man, the feud of the Adamses and the Hendersons had been notorious. It had been carried on down from father to son, from generation to generation, and was still going on. When John was barely ten years old, and when his

good mother was anxious that he get the right start and the right impressions of life, the clouds of the feud had darkened their home. Advise and talk as she would, she could not persuade the hot blooded relatives to desist from their vows. Vengeance must be had and so each son as he came on must take up the trail. It was an evidence of his bravery if he vowed that for the death of some relative he would take the life of some particular foe. They followed the old law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." For years and years, the wiser heads had labored long and hard to eradicate these feudal grudges which gave to their country such a bad name. Much had been accomplished, but much more was yet to be accomplished.

Such women as Mrs. Adams had accomplished much. Always did they give good, wholesome advice, and while all of it had not been heeded, some attention was paid to a little of it occasionally, and gradually the barrier was being broken away. Some were optimistic enough to predict better days.

These were the days of the log house and the big fireplace. Around the log fire gathered the entire family for their evenings. It was here that they spent the evenings, talking, reading and discussing the affairs of the day. Let us remember that the times of which we speak were far removed from the many influences of civilization which we have today. Some will say that that fact was detrimental while others will say that it was a great advantage. There are some who think that out of the world where greater necessity exists, comes the sharpest and brightest minds. Be this as it may, out of the hills of Kentucky have come as bright and quick minds as from any other place in the world, notwithstanding the fact that the schools were poor in quality and short of duration. Libraries were not plentiful or accessible, but every book in the community was thoroughly studied—not just read—but studied. The Book of all books was studied from childhood to old age and a thorough



knowledge of the Bible was a strong recommendation for any man.

Every boy was taught certain things as general principles. First he was taught the severe rules of right and wrong, and out of the ages of feuds had come the rule of fighting fair. The feudal laws demanded that every youth be taught to shoot straight and fight fair. And then the boys were taught that they must not be "proud or stuck up;" they must not feel above their fellowmen; they must always stand ready to lend a helping hand; and their lives should at all times be lived as an influence on others. As one life touches another and helps along a fellowman, thereby its good is measured. These were the cardinal laws of the hills.

John Adams had all this teaching and this kind of influence. And then he had another influence short lived as it was—that was the influence and good advice of his mother. She taught him that feuds were all wrong, and that it was all wrong to desire to kill a fellowman for some wrong he had done to others. She daily impressed on him that the people as a whole constituted a society and that society demanded certain laws; that these laws should be obeyed; that reason and right constituted law; that eventually right and law would banish all feuds; that it was the duty of every boy to do all he could to do away with these things which caused so much trouble in our land. In his youth, John did not think so much of this advice. He was a boy with the hot blood of a southern youth. But as he grew to manhood he found himself following instinctively his mother's advice.

Since the death of John's mother, Dave had been his very best friend. Very often a boy, left without a mother as John was, does not get the advice and counsel, to say nothing of the sympathy needed, from his father. So Dave had been mother to him in many ways. As he grew up into the tall stripling of a boy, this friendship grew firmer.

On such occasions as we have just seen, when John

gave expression to his imagination about nigger Sam, the tallest and most worthless of all the colored population, it was Dave's assumed duty to chastise him. As he did so he secretly laughed at the resourcefulness of the lad. It pleased him to see him growing in mind as well as body.

The Adams home stood on the side of the road about a mile outside of the town of Great Bend. Notwithstanding it was the county seat, Great Bend was only a small village in the mountains of eastern Kentucky, and did not afford a railroad nor any of the modern conveniences. Its population were the direct descendants of the early settlers of the state who had come over from the Virginias and Carolinas. Few people had ever come in to mingle with them and as a consequence they lived as a colony isolated from the world. Their habits, customs and manners were those of a people of centuries ago. Their hospitality was of that particular brand that makes everyone feel at home. With a good reputation and square dealing, a man could live as long as he liked among them without cost. But if he was in disfavor, he might just as well move. No amount of money would give him entree to the homes. The freedom of the community meant something here as it used to mean in England and Europe.

The Adams home was of the usual type—a big log house. It had stood for many years as one of the old homesteads of the country. Here several generations had grown to manhood and womanhood. In its three large rooms downstairs, there had been much merriment, and at times great sadness. It had a beautiful location at the foot of a large mountain and overlooked the most beautiful valley in the whole country. A valley that was rich beyond imagination. A short way below the house a creek came down from the mountains furnishing an abundance of cool, spring, mountain water for the stock, for which the Adams farms had long been famous. This entire creek was the property of the

Adamses. The farming was done in the valley below the house, and it was here that spread out the beautiful meadows and the corn and grain fields, while above the house and below the main road lay an old orchard known as the best in the country. Great oaks and elms gave a setting to the mansion, for such it was known in that locality, which gave it the appearance of the true comfort and hospitality which did actually prevail there.

Great Bend, being on the banks of the Licking River, had in its early days been a logging camp and later retained much of that spirit and was now just a little old dead village. As its name implies, it was in a great bend of the river. One thing must be said in its favor, it had the most beautiful hill, or rather a high mound, back of the village, that can be imagined. It looked as though it had been carefully built there as a background for the village. When the river made the turn at the town it ran due west, so that if one looked directly west from the town he beheld a most beautiful river valley, while directly back of the town and due east was this grand and beautiful old hill. It was known as Sunset Hill because the setting sun covered it with gold. At one time the Adamses had owned all this property including the hill, but had sold it. The hill itself rose in a gradual slope for perhaps a quarter of a mile, when it rose gently and majestically into a large mound and then extended back for half a mile in a ridge.

For many years it had been covered with a beautiful turf of blue grass. There were half a dozen beautiful oak trees in a clump just back of the top of the mound and many more further back toward the main mountain. Near the last trees was the spot sacred to John Adams, because it was here that his mother was buried. Sunset Hill was to the folks of Great Bend what the Fairy Tree was to Joan of Arc and Domremy in France. They almost worshipped it. It was here that the gatherings of note were held. Their political meetings were held here. It was here that the great religious meetings



known as "associations" were held. It was a distinction for any mountain preacher to be invited to preach on Sunset Hill. For years and years on all occasions, Dave Daniels had lifted up his voice on Sunset Hill. This had in fact been his church—his cathedral, if you please. Many times on this old hill had his voice been an inspiration to John Adams. It was no wonder then, that in a far away land, his thoughts turned backward and his memory so vividly pictured the old hill and its scenes, for it was here in these surroundings that he had grown to manhood. These were the scenes which had first impressed themselves upon his mind. And out of all his storehouse of memories, like it is told in the poem—"that of the dim old forest seemeth best of all."

### CHAPTER III

**I**N A WAY, it is unfortunate to be the only girl in a large family of boys, and then in another way it is fortunate. Usually in such a case the girl gets to be a badly spoiled child. Nell Henderson was the adopted daughter of Bill Henderson and had lived with them as long as she could remember. Her mother had made the supreme sacrifice when Nell was born and some five years later her father had been a victim of the deadly Adams-Henderson feud. So far as her treatment and raising was concerned, no one would ever have known but that she was actually the daughter of old Bill. She had all the privileges of the home and all of the boys loved her and treated her as a sister.

She was a bright girl. Her abundance of black hair and her black, snappy eyes told that back of them lay a disposition perfectly able of taking care of herself. She had that ruddy complexion of the mountains. Maybe it had come because of her outdoor life. She loved the hills and knew every foot of them. She loved her horse as much as any of her brothers and she always gave evidence of great love for them. The Henderson home was up the river to the east of Great Bend and about the same distance from town as the Adams home, only in another direction.

Nell and John had been school-mates in the common school ever since they were old enough to go to school. Both knew of the feud which had long existed between their two families and they knew of the terrible toll it had taken. Notwithstanding this fact, they had ever been friends and got along well together. Some thought this might be the influence to heal all the wounds of the

feud and that the time might come when their union, as man and wife, might forever stop the war.

To Nell, Uncle Dave Daniels was the dearest old soul she knew. It seemed to her, as it did to many another little tot, that Dave had always been a part of her life. On many a Saturday had Dave taken the school children to the mountains and John and Nell had always been his favorites on these picnic excursions. Both of them were leaders in their classes at school. It was like breaking the links of a chain when John finished high school and went away to college. Nell had a year yet to go and it was a long year. Many were the times that Dave comforted her in her sadness and just as often did he write to John and tell him what was going on.

When she was through school, she spent her time as do most girls in the mountain towns, just simply living as a part of the society of the community. She was different, in that much of her time was spent in the hills. Sometimes she rode alone and again she went with her brothers about their work. All the time she was longing for the time when John would return from school. She hoped that he would take up the practice of law in Great Bend and yet sometimes she had a feeling that all would not be well when he did return.

The years of youth drag slowly. Impatience makes them go that way. But the day came when John was through school and back home. Nell knew that he was home but she had not seen him. She had heard her father and brothers talking about John and speculating on what course he would take in the community and how he would affect the feud which for years had been quiet. There was little to comfort her in their talk, because it was not at all friendly to John.

On the third day after John's return, he rose early in the morning and saddling his favorite horse, rode up the creek road. He had no place in particular that he was going except that he had not seen his chum, Charlie Morgan, and he thought he would ride up that way and



at the same time get the advantage of an early morning ride in the mountains. It was indeed one of those beautiful days that only the mountains afford, unless it be that they are duplicated in Italy. The Morgan home was across Rock Mountain, some miles from John's home. He rode leisurely along the road, enjoying the morning air as he had never enjoyed it before. He had been a long time away from the mountains and they had more charm for him today than ever before. As he got farther up the creek the road ran through the timber and he could not determine which was the most beautiful, the trees with their beautiful foliage, making a bank of deep green over all the surrounding hills, or the creek with its rock and falls and winding banks. To him it all made such a beautiful picture that he banished from his mind the consideration of going to any other place to locate for his practice. He had thought perhaps some other place would offer to him better opportunities, and in a business way they would not have to be very large to exceed the chances in Great Bend. But he was entirely satisfied this morning. The question was settled with him now. In a few days he would open his office.

With these thoughts in his mind, he climbed up the side of Rock Mountain. The road was not a steep one, but it wound its way gradually over the mountain. It was an old road and had been kept in excellent condition because it was a pride of the country on account of its natural scenery. Here were spruce and pine, mingled closely with oak and beech and poplar, so that at all times of the year a beautiful scene unfolded itself to the traveler. Here were rock and cliff, and there were valley and creek. To any traveler it was beautiful, but to a young man—a Kentuckian—such as John, it was an ideal spot.

It was the middle of the forenoon when he came around a curve in the road, that he saw two people sitting on a rock high above the road. It took only the first glance to tell him that it was Nell and Dave. They

had not seen him. They were in deep conversation. He waved his hat and shouted to them. Immediately both of them returned his shout and Dave told him to come up at once. He rode up out of the road and in the timber a short way from the road he found their horses. He tied his horse close to them and went up to the top of the rocks where his friends sat. They were indeed glad to see him and he was just as eager to see them. After greetings he seated himself with them and here they talked and renewed old times. Dave, as was usually the case, when he was around, led the conversation. He took great pleasure in teasing Nell about her actions and inquiries while John had been away. It is the way with a girl that she could not help but feel that her face was very red and that he was getting too near to the truth to be comfortable for her.

"Well, old day-dreamer, where were you headed for when we interrupted your dream? You looked just like you were studying out the knottiest problem that Blackstone ever had, when we looked down at you."

"Don't forget that I am the one who first made the discovery and made the first noise. I believe I could have ridden right on past without being at all noticed. I am going over to see Charlie. What are you two outlaws doing so far away from home?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, we did not realize that we were so far from home until we stopped here. We had some things to talk about that were very important and we had not noticed how far we had come. And then Nell wanted to talk about you so she suggested we come up here and rest a while where no one could hear."

"Now, Uncle Dave!"

"Well, it's the gospel truth, ain't it?"

"Suppose it is. Do you have to tell all you know?"

"No, I reckon not. But there never used to be any secrets between us when we were younger and why should there be now? I'll tell you, John, Nell wanted to ask me several things about you and just what she

should do, and I was giving her the best advice my old head contains when you interrupted us. Now that the subject of the conversation is here we may just as well go on with our talk all together."

"Why, Uncle Dave, you are getting meaner every day!"

"Well, now, bein' as how you two will want to talk together for quite a spell, I am going to ride over and see Sam Stapleton. I heard last night he is a purty sick man. You can jus' stay here as long as you like and then I guess you know the way home. John don't have to go to Charlie's today. So I'll bid you all adieu!"

He rose and started down the hill, humming a tune of the mountains. It was not a "meetin' house song" either. It was the old, old song that every boy in the mountains knew: "Sourwood Mountains." Nell called after him:

"Uncle Dave, is that a new song you are practicing up on for next Sunday's services?"

"That's a fine song just the same, little miss. That's one of the greatest songs of the hills. It's not a new one but we all know it and have heard it so much in these hills that it is about like the wind, if we don't hear it once in a while, we get lonesome. Do you know what is the greatest song ever written?"

"I guess it must be 'Sourwood Mountains,' Uncle Dave."

"No, 'tain't, smarty. But let me tell you I know what it is and one of these days before you die I will sing it to you. Goodbye—I'll see you all later."

He disappeared down the mountain side, mounted his horse and they saw him ride along the road out of sight. Both of them loved Uncle Dave at that moment as they always had loved him.

Together they sat and talked. The hours slipped away. The company of each was tonic for the other. Life was bubbling over for them. The sun was bright and warm. The air was clear and overhead was that blue sky flecked with the few white clouds to make it



ideal. It was a Kentucky sky, a mountain sky, a boy and girl sky, a lovers' sky. Looking away down the valley over the green carpeted hills, they wondered how trouble could invade such a sacred land. As they looked up into the blue sky they knew that up there was One who was directing all things for good. In a tree close by a cardinal was singing his most beautiful song with all his might. To them at that moment the keynote of all creation was love. They were in a delirium which carried them to the topmost peaks of joy. Day-dreams are not practiced in duets and yet these two had been feasting on the unsubstantial food of very pleasant dreams. In fact, the dreams had been so very vivid that they had taken on the nature of plans for the future.

Youth is brave. Even though danger is apparent and trouble looms near, the mind of youth, and especially a youth in love, is given to taking the long chance. There is the hope against hope and the faith in the feelings of the heart that everything will in some way come out right. Difficulties are often an incentive, and a great one, to make plans work out.

"Now I have told you all that I know and all that I suspect. I have given you my fears. You know these people here in the hills. You know their hot blood stirs easily. They are unforgiving and unrelenting. A grudge once well established is carried on for generations until some influence wipes it out. Sometimes this is accomplished by simple destruction—the survival of the strongest—and again it may come about by a union of forces and an agreement to bury all differences. You think the Adams-Henderson feud will be ended that way, and yet you have not given me a single plan or reason why it will. For my part I hope you are right. But I believe before it is ended it will again take toll of the lives of our people. I am in continual fear all the time. My brothers and my father have no use for you and your brother. They may speak and outwardly treat you right, but I know their secret thoughts still contain

the old grudge. If you open an office and begin practicing law, I know you will get business and will succeed, but that will only make it worse. There will come a time when your paths will cross on some business matter and if the setting is right there will be trouble and plenty of it. I shudder to think what it will be. Who can tell? I hate for you to go away from here, but that is the reason that I just hoped a little bit that you would decide that we would live some other place."

John, holding Nell's hand, had been a very attentive listener. He was conscious that he had a new responsibility now. Before today he had thought for himself, had made his own plans and carried them out. He had taken no one else into consideration. In fact, there had been no one else permanently in his plans until today. Now it was he and Nell. Passionately had he argued his case with her. He had loved her since childhood and against heavy odds had they retained their friendship, and this friendship had ripened into love. It had been mutual, and yet loving John as dearly as she did, Nell realized the danger of a union between them, because she knew that it would never be with the consent of her father.

John had outlined his plans and today, on this wonderful day, he had asked Nell to be his wife and she had said "yes." Their lips had met in the passionate kiss of love. And as he had gazed down deep into her wonderful black eyes, he had realized that there is another side to life that he had not yet known. He had not changed his mind about locating in Great Bend. He knew all the dangers and all the chances he was taking, but he had thought of these things before.

"Well, Nell, I know all these things and I have thought of them just as you have, but don't you think that the people here are more sensible than they used to be and that they look at things in a different way? Don't you believe that when we are married they will think too much of you to cause any trouble for us? And then,

dear, if there does come trouble we must remember that trouble is likely to come any place we are, and that we shall have to learn to take care of ourselves. I believe that the old grudges are forgotten, but if they are not, I am sure that I can successfully handle the situation if it should break out again. I am willing to try it anyway. I shall be working for you now and with such a duty I can accomplish anything."

"Don't you be too sure about all these things. You can talk and argue with one man but not with a number of men or a mob with bad motives and determination to execute them. But if you will not see it otherwise, my lot is with yours and as Ruth said, 'Wheresoever you go, I will go, and where you die, there will I be buried.' I don't vouch for the correctness of the quotation but that's the idea anyway."

"I think that the early fall, say about October first, will be about the time for us to get married. By that time I will have my office well established. I may not have a big clientele filling the reception room every day, but I will be getting on some, anyway. That is the finest time of the year here in the hills. You and I both agree on that, so what do you say to fixing the day along about that time?"

"That time will suit me well enough, but I want you to agree with me on one thing and that is that you will listen closely for any information that will give you a clue to any trouble and I will do the same. I am brave enough in all things except leading you into the shambles."

"Don't you worry about the shambles. I am able-bodied and am supposed at all times to be able to give account of myself."

"That's just the trouble. If anything starts, I fear that you will be just as likely to carry it on as the next one."

"Well, anyway, we can keep up our practice now of thinking of each other at sunset. I call that the An-



gelus. I tell you I had an awful time some days of getting away for my little quiet half hour at that time. But I didn't miss many. Only when it was impossible did I miss. I have had more good, real enjoyment out of this plan of ours, to think of each other at sunset, than anything of my life, except today, of course.

"They have scolded me many a time because I was late to supper when I would be on the south porch looking toward the east where you were. It was comfort always. I believe we were able to make our thoughts reach each other even though the miles were between us. It was a kind of mental wireless telephone to me. If I asked you a question, I invariably had the satisfaction of an answer. I could not hear your voice, but just the same I knew you were thinking of me at that very time and that we were closer together for doing so. It has been a splendid idea and I have always been glad that we had the custom. I guess if some people knew about it they would accuse us of being spiritualists. But what do we care? We are living spirits anyway.

"Let's talk with Uncle Dave about our plans tomorrow. He will give us a lot of good advice. You know, I think that man is a real wonder. Here he is in the hills, uneducated and with no broad experience, and yet he could make rules of conduct for the entire world, I do believe. And the best of it is, the rules would be right and the world would be better off for following them. We'll talk with him tomorrow."

"Suits me all right. He surely has given me a world of advice. Ever since I can remember, he has been the one person who was final authority with me. I think we had better be going. It will be sunset now before we get home."

They were loath to leave the spot which to them would always be the dearest on earth. Had the people of Great Bend been reviewing this procession, they would have seen a perfect specimen of young manhood,

full of all the vigor, imagination and plans of youth and realizing that on this day he had taken from the world's richest casket, the brightest and most valuable jewel.

With his arm around this mountain girl, he led her carefully down the mountainside toward their horses. Her heart was no slower than his in its intoxication. Both were as happy as youth could be.



## CHAPTER IV

“**B**ILL HENDERSON, you are the same old fool you allus wus. I tell you now is the time to accomplish something to be proud of. If you will say the word and take the lead in this, this country will be peaceable for years to come, and that ought to give any man enough satisfaction. The good we do for human beings is all that counts anyway. I have talked with John and Nell and they tell me they are engaged. For my part, I am mighty glad of it. They deserve each other. They are the two finest young people in the world. Now I know all the grudge between the families and I thought the thing to do was to come at once and talk with you, and I was in hopes that you would see this as I see it and would do the thing which would make you a reward in heaven, if anything could. These young people think that the feud will never break out again. They have the hopes of youth. But you and I, who are older, know the ways of the people in the hills. We know if you say the word, that there never will be any more of it, and we also know that if you do not, when the time comes, and some day it will come, there will be trouble and more bloodshed. I think you ought to be eager to end the feud now and have all the credit for it.”

“No. I’m not goin’ to start any trouble. But I’m no man to run away from them that stirs it up. Nell will never marry that young smart alec. He just wants her for her property. He has nothin’ to get along on and he will never amount to anything anyway. I don’t want him in my family. I’d like to ’commodate you, Dave, but you are askin’ too much.”

“Well, you will see that I am right. If you attempt

to keep these young folks from gettin' married, you'll have a job and they'll win out in the long run. You are wrong about John Adams. You and I will live to see the day when he is the leading lawyer in eastern Kentucky, mark my word."

According to their plans, John and Nell had talked with Dave. He had been elated over their engagement and had told them how glad he was. He had joked a good deal with John about "drumming up law business" for him. He would do all he could for him and help him get enough business coming along so that he could keep the wolf from the door. But seriously, he was thinking that there was more trouble in store for these two young folks than they imagined. Nell had told him of her fears in a mild way, and Dave had said that of course all this was to be thought of, but that he hoped that the people had more reason than they had had in the past. He told them that he would try to be the reserve forces for them and that if anything did come up he would try and control it.

After their talk, Nell had quietly seen Dave and told him her fears fully and frankly. She assured him that it would be positively wicked for her to marry John if it would cause him to be murdered or even place him in greater danger than he already was. She would rather sacrifice all her love, and goodness knows that would be a great sacrifice for her. But she loved John so much that rather than place him in danger she would give him up. At least, she would give him up for the present.

Dave listened attentively to her and when she was finished, told her that there would be no need of her going to the extremes which she mentioned, but that he did agree with her that the situation was a serious one. He knew her father and what an obstinate man he was, one of those men who believed thoroughly in the law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" and had practiced it all his life. He knew that it would be no

easy task to convince him that he ought to agree to the marriage. Bill Henderson was a man of power in the community. He stood well and had many friends. He was not a man to start trouble himself, but he could not keep out of a mixup once it was started by someone else. Dave realized all these difficulties, but he promised Nell that he would have a talk with Bill and see what he could accomplish. His heart bled for these young friends of his as he left Nell and gave himself up to serious thought on the subject. The more he thought of it, the more he tried to make himself believe that he could make Bill see things as he saw them. He had thought it all out and then had seen Bill, with the result that we have just seen.

Dave was not a moody man. He did not let the problems of life get on his nerves. He was one of those men who believed that a situation was never hopeless, but that there was a solution if it could only be found. He thought it was his duty to find the solution in this case and he told himself of his task. First of all, it was better to find Nell and tell her of his failure to convince Bill. He knew that from now on her life would be anything but a pleasant one. He found her at her Aunt Fannie's and told her all that had taken place between him and Bill. He regretted that he had failed. They must keep on trying from another angle until they succeeded. Nell expressed no hope. In fact, she was convinced in her own mind that there was nothing to do but to fight it out as conditions arose, and yet she argued with herself if she really had a right to subject John to such great dangers.

"Uncle Dave, if it was just me I could get along. I have lived with my people all my life. I know how to get along with them. I would not hesitate to fight the battle as an enemy of my own people if it was confined to me alone, but to take John into all this, I wonder if I should do it? Isn't it a selfish act? I am going to give this very serious thought."



When he left the house he met John, who had just selected an office, and wanted Dave to go with him and pass judgment on his choice. Dave was glad to do so and together they went to the rooms selected in the only little building in the town which afforded offices. John was in great spirits. Dave knew full well that he was sailing on hopes above his heights, but had not the courage to bring him down. They talked of the arrangement of the offices and of the prospects for future business and all those things which would naturally come up with a young man just beginning a legal career. Finally John said:

“Uncle Dave, I want you to come and live with me and help me here in the office. We have been such good friends and you have done so much for me, now that I am starting in life and you have no family, I want you to be my companion for the rest of your life. This office will be a good loafing place for you and you can have a room and do many things for me. This need not interfere with your preaching, but it should make it all the better. What do you say, old friend?”

This was just a little too much for the sturdy old man on this particular day when his mind was so full of thoughts and none of them properly arranged. It seemed that everything was coming up on this day. Tears came to his eyes. He was visibly affected. There was no one in all the world with whom he would rather live. And John needed him now, needed him near at hand all the time. John had enough of this world's goods that Dave would not be a burden to him. Yet Dave had always been independent and self-supporting. He owned a little piece of land and while he had no family, his wife having died years ago, it was not easy for him to get along from year to year. He was not young any more and he began to feel the lonesomeness that comes with years when the family is gone. He sat down and for a long, long time held his head in his hands and said nothing. John knew him well enough

to know that he was fighting out his battle alone. Sturdy old warrior! He admired him for doing it. He was not afraid of the decision. If he objected, he would argue him into it. He knew that Dave needed just such assistance as he was offering him and that now was the time to offer it to him. It would not do to wait until something happened and then offer it, because that course would hurt the pride of the grand old man. Yes, now was the only time. He had done just as his conscience had told him he should do. It was not an impulsive thought. He had thought it all out long ago. As he sat there and watched the old man, John thought what a grand figure he was. How fine a head, and what dignity his silvery hair gave to him!

"This is just like you, John. You are the good Samaritan. You find the old man by the roadside, not bleeding or suffering, but you anticipate all these things and you lend a hand. It's fine of you. I am thinking whether I ought to accept your offer, though. Some day I will become a burden to you, maybe, to you and Nell, and then—well, old people are in the way, you know. I have never thought much about old age until just here lately. Here I am. I have no family. I was not blessed with children who could comfort me in my old days. My wife was taken from me all too soon after we were married, God rest her soul. I have no relatives. I am healthy now and can get along with what I have and what I can make. But there will come a day when infirmities will lay hold of me and those are the days I have been thinking about, John. Oh, yes, I know what you are thinking. The people here are extremely good to me. It seldom comes to a man to occupy the position in the hearts of a community that I do here, and I am proud of it. But you know there is none so sad as the spectacle of an old man alone in the world and without his own means of support, going out into the storms of the last years of his life realizing that he has no one on whom he can lean. He realizes



that he is alone in the world. He suffers a broken heart, not because his business and worldly efforts have not been crowned with success, but because he is uncared for. Life holds no honor and no gift that will dry the tears for him who feels that he has drifted beyond the care of his fellowman. If he finds himself without friends or relatives, no matter what he may have accomplished, no matter what he may have gained or lost in the world, this sorrow of his last days is worse than all.

"I know that the people here would care for me, but that is not a relative's care. Garfield said: 'Friendship is the fairest flower that grows in the garden of the world.' That was a fine expression and a fine sentiment. It is as true as anything that was ever uttered. I like to read again and again of the friendship of David and Jonathan, and of Damon and Pythias. But don't you know that in my time I have seen friendships as sacred and as fine as any of these. You are making an example here today. Our friendship has been a true one. Since that dark day in your life when your mother was taken away, my love for you has been as great as if you were my own son. Your interests have always been my interests. It has been love that has prompted it all. And now it seems to me that you are out-doing it all and making me feel like a very small friend. I know this offer comes from your heart, and that you are sincere when you make it. I appreciate it more than I can tell, my good friend. I shall let you know in a day or so what I shall do."

John knew that he need not argue further at this time because it was the wrong way to deal with Dave. He feared not the decision. It would be as he wanted it. Dave would come and he would have the influence of his mind and presence as long as he lived. Dave felt sure that he knew too, but he wanted to think a little further on the subject and he wanted to talk with Nell about it. She must be considered, too.

## CHAPTER V

WHEN old Bill came home that night, Nell was sitting on the porch reading a book. He scarcely spoke to her and went directly into the house. She knew what was coming. At the supper table Bill did a great deal of talking to his sons about the coming election and about different business matters. It was all in a strained, unnatural expression. He was like a volcano, just ready to erupt. The pressure was getting too great for him. He did not mention John's name but he might just as well, because Nell knew what he meant. He summed it all up in one sentence—

“Medlers allus gets theirs. It beats hell how the upstarts in this country think they can run the place. They ought to learn some sense. But maybe it will have to be pounded into their heads.”

After supper, the other folks had all gone down town. It was Saturday night. Nell sat on the porch. The sun was just setting, and the Henderson home was a beautiful place at sunset. The sun streamed up the valley between the hills fairly on the house and grounds as long as there was a ray left. In addition to the beauty of this scene, the time held another charm for Nell. It was thinking time for her and for John. She knew he was thinking of her at that very moment. Her thoughts were particularly sweet and pleasant today, notwithstanding all the clouds in the future horizon. As she sat there, deep in her reverie, Bill came out of the house and sat down beside her. For a little while he sat in silence. Nell knew he intended to talk.

“Nell, I hear talk about you and John Adams. They say you are goin' with him. Anything to it?”

“Why, yes, I have seen him a few times since his

return. He is going to open a law office here and we have always been friends since we were little and I have treated him the same as I always did. No harm in it, is there?"

"No. Jus' so long as it don't get serious. I ain't aimin' to have him as a son-in-law. He's not our kind. He never will amount to anything anyway. He may want to get your property by marryin' you. He ain't got anything hisself."

"Well, I don't think John Adams is that kind of a man. He is not after my property. I think he is the brightest young man in this county, and he has always treated me as a gentleman should."

"You jus' recollect that he's an Adams and the Adamses and Hendersons don't mix. Leastwise the good uns don't."

"I have always treated and respected you as a father and have conformed to all your wishes. I shall attempt to continue to do so in all things in which I think you have a right to expect it, but I cannot let you tell me who I shall go with so long as they are respectable persons. I know how you feel towards the Adamses and all who oppose the Hendersons, but I had hopes that that bitter feeling was gone and that friendship was to take its place."

"Hell! You women know a lot about runnin' things, don't you? There'll come a time when every speckled Adams will be gone from this county and I will be damn glad of it. This young squirt of a John will make a great lawyer. The first time he is in a case with Jack Plummer, he'll jus' naturally brain him. And then he'll be dun. You better jus' forget him."

"No, I'll not forget him. I shall try to do nothing that will be the cause of any trouble. If I do right, my conscience will be clear. I hope you will try to do the same thing."

"You know I am no man to start trouble."

"I know that. But I cannot say as much for the



boys. Some of them may start something if you do not take the right stand now. And now is the time to take it, too. If it is started, you will get into it as you always do, and then you will be looked upon as the leader. Won't you promise me that you will give your counsel against trouble?"

"I'll promise nothin'. You're not helpin' any. If any trouble comes, blame yourself, if you keep goin' with that rat."

Bill got up and went down through the yard toward the road and town. She knew the situation now and knew it plainly. It was as she had feared. What was she to do? She knew that nothing would be done now nor in the near future, but that if she continued to go with John she would have poor treatment at home and that he would get the cold shoulder from several, who would otherwise be friends. She would talk again to Dave and see if he had any solution. Oh, if John would only decide to go to Lexington or Louisville, or to any other place, just to get away from Great Bend. But she was afraid he was going to stay. He was so confident that he could handle the situation. She feared to argue the matter with him.

Next day was Sunday and Dave was to preach on Sunset Hill. The Hendersons would all go as they always did and as did everybody else in Great Bend. Nell would rather have talked with Dave alone, than to hear him preach. But she had no chance to see him before Monday at the soonest. It was a bright, sunny morning and the drive from the Henderson home to Sunset Hill was fine. They went early enough that they could visit with all the neighbors and hear all the news. These visits took the place of the newspaper. It was like going back through the ages to the time when news was carried by travelers and when the laws were published by town criers. This locality had progressed little beyond that stage. John was there, but Nell did not talk with him except to greet him. She saw one of her



brothers talking with him. She dared to hope he might be friendly.

After the singing and the prayer, Dave preached. Nell had never heard him in such a sermon. He surpassed himself in the effort. His text was in the parable of the good Samaritan. The real object was friendship. She was not acquainted with the cause for this sermon but she did know to what he referred when he launched forth on the subject of human conduct and the peace of the world. She had heard him when troubles were abroad in the land, talk against lawlessness, but she had never heard anything like his sermon today.

"The good book says: 'Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart; for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.' My friends, the greatest man in all the world is the true friend, as I have tried to tell you this morning. The next best person is that person who does good for humanity. When we have a dear friend do acts of goodness and kindness for us, we are pleased. Our hearts go out to him. We love him with the same love that David had for Jonathan. But when a man does an act that touches the lives of many people, and makes them better, and gives to his country better conditions, that man has performed a duty which will make him be called the child of God. Friends, this county of ours has seen some dark days. We are not proud of all its record. I am not fixing the blame. That is beyond my province. Judge not, that ye be not judged. For a long time now we have had a peaceable, quiet neighborhood. We have lived in harmony and in the enjoyment of our homes and the entire country is better off because we have done so. God grant us years and more years of just such happiness in our valley. May the heart strings of every person be touched by the Director of all things in a way that it may truthfully be said

of us all, we are clean of heart; we have been merciful; we are children of God."

On and on did he go in his wonderful discourse on the subject, hoping that he could say something to them collectively that would touch the minds of the Hendersons, and direct them in the right channel. He was pouring out his supreme effort. He pictured the nation as built up of states and that every state must be law-abiding; that every state was made up of counties, each of which must conform to all the laws governing individuals; that the counties were made up of townships and the townships were made up of homes and that the home must have its laws; that the individual could not transgress the rights of another individual without affecting all, but that we must all live with due regard for others; that while we were created free and equal, and endowed with certain inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, every other person has the same rights; that laws are not made for one person or one family, but the rights of all make the laws governing society. Just so long as there are people with minds and business to perform, there will be differences of opinion. Nations are the same as individuals.

"St. John tells us, in his vision, that he saw an angel coming down from heaven having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And that he laid hold of the devil and bound him, and cast him into the bottomless pit where he shut him up and put a seal on the door for a thousand years, so that he could not, during this thousand years seduce the nations. And that when the thousand years shall be finished Satan shall be loosed out of the prison, and shall go forth over the four quarters of the earth and seduce the nations and shall gather them together to battle.

"My friends, this is the prophecy of the Bible. This earth has been comparatively peaceful as a whole, for a long space of time. How can we say that this prediction will not come true in time? As I read the signs

of the times, we are nearing a world disturbance. The nations are fretful and restless. The peoples of the earth are ready to make demonstration for supremacy. There is a great jealousy over commerce and trade. When shall Satan be loosed to urge them on to battle? My friends, it is my belief that a world trouble is stirring in Europe. The German people are steeped in Kaiserism until they want war. Her policies of blood and iron tend to disturbance. Her overbearing policies will not always be tolerated. The nations of France, Belgium, Italy and Great Britain, are not convinced that God has gone into partnership with Germany. Some day soon we shall have a world war and then God help the American people. They probably will not be to blame. But we are such a great commercial nation that it would be practically impossible for us to keep out of a World War. When it comes it will call all the stalwart young men of this nation. And when they go many of them will never return.

"As I stand here now, methinks I can see on a far-away soil, great cemeteries of American dead, and throughout a foreign land, cross after cross, each marking the resting place of some dear son of an American mother. All have fallen for their country's cause. The conflict will be long and will depopulate the earth, as nation after nation is drawn into the maelstrom of battle. But that is not the worst. After the battles have been fought and won and the war is over, there must come what always follows war. And St. John again has told us of disease, pestilence, want and death, which follow war. And that, friends, will be the real disaster of it all. The predictions of the Bible come true, and this one will come true sometime. I know not when these things will come to pass, nor is it given to any man or any nation to know where it will start, but it behooves us all to live the lives of the merciful so that we may receive mercy. The great Shakespeare tells us that 'the quality of mercy is not strained. It



falleth as the gentle rain from heaven. It is twice bless'd. It blesseth him that gives and him that takes!' Let us do all that we can in this little community of ours to help our nation be ready for the great ordeal through which we shall surely go."

Again he launched forth about the rights and actions of the individual. He was determined to do his full duty in this sermon. It had been his aim to do his best. It was aimed at individuals over the shoulders of the congregation. It had not been so great a part of his sermon that he predict a World War so vividly as he had done, although he had thought much on the subject. His chief aim was to make a few individuals realize their full duties with a hope that they would heed at least a part of what he said.

"I say to you, that the man who nurses his wrath to keep it warm, is a dangerous man. He who cools the friends and heats the enemies of any man is a murderer at heart and deserves the punishment of fire and brimstone. You cannot have friends without being one yourself. Long have we had the reputation of being the very garden in which this flower of friendship grows. Here in our own dear state; here where we love the hills as no other people love their land—shall we make this reputation a living reality? Shall we practice what we preach?"

It was a sermon that to this day is remembered and talked about throughout all the hill country. It was Dave Daniels' greatest effort, and that was a reputation for any man. After the doxology, which was sung with unusual spirit, the people, with hushed voices, quietly dispersed to their homes. They did not stay to visit and talk. They did not forget the sermon when the preacher stopped talking. Only here and there was heard a remark such as: "That was the gospel truth." "Dave Daniels is the greatest man in the world." "There is food for thought for many a day." And one young man lightly remarked: "When do we mobilize?" His



remark was not taken as funny as he had intended it and the withering looks around him silenced him and sent him home.

Nell knew that Dave had done his greatest effort for her. She knew not what effect it would have, but she realized the sincerity of his effort and she appreciated it all. The entire Henderson family was very quiet as they went to their home.

John walked slowly to his office deep in thought.

"I wonder where he gets all those war ideas? We studied those things in school. He is right in what he says about unrest. It is every place, in nation as well as individual. But I never thought that that old white-haired friend of mine here in the mountains could talk that kind of stuff with so much effect. He certainly gave Bill Henderson enough hints to keep him still the rest of his life. It would be more than a coincidence if his predictions about war would come true. Dave is getting into the highbrow class. I shall have to take him down a peg or two."

But he could not get the words of the old preacher out of his mind. They kept ringing in his ears. War—War—War—when would it come? Where would it start? What part would he have in it? Would he have a home which might be affected by it when it came? Would a cross mark his resting place on foreign soil? Would his grave be a known or an unknown one? Would he be on the side of the victors or the vanquished? All of it occupied his mind. After reaching his office he sat long in thought on the sermon.

## CHAPTER VI

**D**AVE came into John's office some time after John arrived and found him still in deep study about the sermon.

"Well, my good friend, I have decided to accept your kind offer provided that I will still be self-sustaining. I will live at your house with you for the pleasure of your company, and will do whatever there is that I can do here at the office. But I shall keep myself. If that will suit you, we will call it a deal."

"It is a trade, then," said John, as he rose and walked over to the window. He stood there a few minutes and then turned and said: "Move in when you are ready, Uncle Dave. I will get you a key to the office tomorrow. But now tell me something. Where did you ever get that war stuff in your head? And where on earth did you ever get all your knowledge about national and international affairs?"

"My boy, I have not had many works of history to read, but what I have had I read well and have studied them in the light of my Bible. You know it does not take many volumes to fill an old head like mine. I do love to read the predictions and the history as contained in the Bible. That is the best history of all."

"What do you actually think about those predictions and prophecies to which you referred in your sermon today?"

"I believe just what I said and more. There is so much unrest in the world today that it cannot help but result in a great upheaval sometime in the near future. Germany is getting to be an awful aggressor among nations. Bismarck gave them a very bad training. He

was a strong man and over-reached himself. By that I mean that his theories are going to be adopted to the extent that the German Empire will feel too sure of herself, and this young Kaiser will some day make a bad move, and war will be on in earnest. No people ever set themselves up as the elect of the world that they did not come to grief. The Venetians ruled at one time and bade fair to dominate, but they lorded it just once too often; Rome tried it and failed; England is trying it now commercially. They all have their fling some time but the United States is getting too much of a world power, especially in a commercial way, to suit Europe. Those old countries hate to see a new nation come up, just like boys hate to see a new leader spring up among the gang. He has to prove his right. So does a nation. And it's coming, John, just as sure as fate."

"Yes, but what connection does the vision of St. John have with all this?"

"I'll admit that the world has not been free from local wars for a thousand years, but we have not had what could have been called a World War. If we should have a World War some ten years from now, I would think that the prophecy has come true. That is just the idea of an old, ignorant preacher of the hills, but it is my idea just the same."

"All right, old pard. We'll just wait and see. In the meanwhile you are going home with me to dinner and spend the rest of the day. You gave me too much in that wonderful sermon of yours this morning. You have to entertain me the rest of the day to keep me from having a case of the willies."

They spent the Sunday together. Dave did not tell John that Nell had not only advised that he go to live with him, but had insisted that he go at once. She had told him how much John needed him and he could not reason out the strangeness of her manner while talking to him. She had an air of mystery or indecision or



something that was entirely foreign to her. He attributed it to nervousness over the present situation.

Dave told John about his talk with Bill. He thought it was due him that he should. The fact that he had not accomplished anything did not affect John. He argued that was to be expected. He contended that the best way was to leave the situation alone. The more it was disturbed, the worse it would be. He could meet emergencies when they arose, if they ever did. He knew that Bill at first would not approve the engagement to Nell, but he thought that before the time for the wedding, and when he found that his objections would accomplish nothing, he would be at least agreeable and would cause no trouble. Dave assured him that he had a bigger problem than that to deal with. He cautioned him that he would have to be careful in the cases he accepted; that if any of them involved the rights of a Henderson or an intimate friend, then he could look for trouble. It might come soon or it might be years. The Henderson boys were a wild lot and hard to please. They were just a little anxious for some excitement.

It had been many years since there had been a good lawyer in Great Bend. The practice was given up mostly to a pettifogging practice. Dave's brother, William Daniels, was the best lawyer in the town. He had always been square and had attended to his business and was known to do the right thing. He had the best of the practice. He was not getting rich at it, but was making a living. He evidenced his friendship for John by offering him any assistance he could give him. John knew that his clients were not going to come to him very rapidly, but he was willing to wait and by taking his part in public and civic affairs, he hoped to build well. He had his ideas about the feudal affairs and was keeping them to himself. He was sure he could handle them. He thought that both Dave and Nell were taking them all too seriously.



While John and Dave were spending the day together, Nell was at home, a very sober girl. The entire family were at home. In the afternoon, Ezra Whitaker and family came to visit. Ezra lived down the river several miles. His farm was a part of one of the various large tracts of land that were known as Virginia grants because the original patents to the land had been granted by the state of Virginia, before the state of Kentucky was formed. Later these tracts had been cut up into smaller farms. The man who had owned this particular grant last had reserved the coal rights under the land, when he sold it. This reservation had laid unnoticed for many years. Lately there had been some coal developments in the county and the heirs of the old grantor had looked up their rights and proposed to do some developing themselves. Whitaker had heard of this and he proposed to protect his rights by the ancient means of might. No one should come on his land to take any coal, no matter what his deed said. No effort had been made, but he had heard it rumored that the owners were going to develop and had formed a company known as the Great Bend Coal Company. So far the local people had been sure of controlling any lawyer who might have a case against them. But now that John Adams had opened an office in the county, they did not know what their position was. So Ezra had come over to advise with Bill Henderson about it. Nell heard them talking about it and thought at once that she sensed the first trouble. The subject was discussed pro and con. She went upstairs and left them still discussing it. She could still hear them talking after she left. After a while she heard her father say:

“Well now, you just let them go to John and if he takes that case and tries to handle it, we will let him go until he gets it well into Court and then we will turn the people against him for taking away the rights of our old citizens who have been in peaceable possession so long. If that won’t work, then someone is likely to

get mad and then—well, you just wait and listen. Then you can go to the funeral.”

“I don’t want any trouble. I am a peaceable man,” said Ezra. “But I’ll jest leave it to you, Bill. And I’ll do jest what you say.”

This was enough for Nell. She knew that she was right in her suspicions. She could hardly wait till the morrow to tell Dave and ask his advice. But one thing she did do, and that was to make her plans for the future that night. She felt that she could not have on her hands the blood of the man she loved. Throughout the night, as she lay thinking of what she should do, always she came to the one conclusion, no matter from what angle she approached the subject. She knew that William Daniels, following his custom, would not take the case of the coal company, and she just as well knew that John Adams was the only other available man. And she believed that he would take it. Once he was known as the attorney for the coal company, he would be a marked man and no telling what would happen or how soon. She began to see the cruel and unrelenting side of the world as she tossed in her bed all the live-long night, without sleep. She was up early, dressed and rode away immediately after breakfast. She went to her Aunt Fannie’s.

## CHAPTER VII

IT WAS not his first client who opened the door of his office near noon and entered John's office. He was alone. Dave had been there all morning but had gone down on the street. Nell entered and came smiling to his desk. He arose and greeted her. He knew not the importance of her visit, nor did he know what it cost her in effort to go to his office under all the circumstances. But she knew where her duty lay and boldly she followed its course. His was not a very presentable law office as yet, but it did afford some chairs and a desk. A few books were on his desk. He was at least ready for business.

"Well, I hardly expected my first client would be such an important personage. You are quite welcome to our office. Won't you sit down and state your case fully?"

"John, I wish I could be as free and light-hearted as you. I also wish I was the first client and that I could bring you such an important case that it would make you famous. But I can only bring you Nell, who promised only such a short time ago to be yours. But I can wish you all the good success in your chosen profession which you so justly deserve to have. Now there, isn't that a fine speech for me to make?"

"That is the grandest speech I shall ever hear from anyone, and I appreciate it more than from anyone else. I have made no mistake in my selection as a law partner. The firm of Adams & Adams shall grow and prosper. You look great this morning. But why the flush on your face? Have you been running up my stairs?"

Seating herself she told him all that had happened



since she had seen him. She withheld nothing, and she added her suspicions and opinion as she went along. She knew that she must tell it all and do what she could to help him. After she had concluded, John leaned back in his chair and thought a moment.

"Nell, I still believe you are unduly excited over all this affair. I admit that it looks as though I am starting out under difficulties. But I must not quit now. I will not be driven out of my home town. And if the coal company comes to me I will take their case if it is a legitimate one."

This did not surprise Nell, for it was just what she expected. Had he expressed himself otherwise, she would have thought that he was doing so for her sake. She liked him better for his frankness. Continuing he said:

"Now I want you to quit your worrying. The first good opportunity I have after I have been here a few more days, I want to have a good talk with Bill. He and I can get along. At least we can have an understanding."

She strongly advised against this course. It would do no good and might precipitate the trouble more quickly. He listened to her but did not change his opinion or determination.

"Now," said Nell, "I want to talk some more. You and I must have some more agreements just now. There is no telling what may happen. I am not flighty or unreasonable. I am just cautious. I have promised to be your wife and I am proud of it. I want to see you as often as I can. But if it cannot be often until there is a change in conditions, I want you to understand that I deem it for the best. I do not want you to get impatient and blame me, if I decide that I must not see you for days at a time. My life at home is not going to be a pleasant one from now on, and I want you to agree with me that we will keep our Angelus, as you call it. At sunset, you know? At that hour no matter



where I am or what is the condition, I want to know that you are thinking of me and I shall be thinking of you. If I have problems to present to you I believe you will understand them and that, as in the past, I shall have my answer and my counsel. And I would like to extend this a little further. Let's make this a life-time vow. I mean, let's agree that we shall do this always. It will be good for us even though we have no troubles. After we are married, you will be away on business and it will be nice then. If I should be away, I shall want to follow the custom. And I want you to promise me today that you will do this forever."

"If I never have to make a promise any more difficult to keep than this one, I will be getting off easy. I gladly promise. I have had just as much good out of these quiet hours as you have. I would have suggested the same thing myself. But I don't like to see you so serious today."

"Maybe I am too serious. But just the same I like to have these important matters settled. I am so glad that Uncle Dave decided to come to live with you. He will be the best companion in the world. I hope we may have him with us as long as he lives. I am sure he will be a great comfort in his old age."

"How did you know he had decided to come and live with me? Have you seen him this morning? He only left here a few moments ago."

"No, I haven't seen him today. But he came and asked me the day you invited him. He said I was to be one of the family and he wanted my advice. I gave it to him quickly. I told him we wanted him and wanted him now. He was for waiting until we are married, but I made him promise to begin today. And that is the other thing I want an agreement on. You are doing quite a business today in agreements, aren't you? I want you to promise me that no matter what happens, you will keep Uncle Dave with you as long as he lives. If I should die, I want you to keep him. If I

live and we are married and live happily ever afterward, as the story book says, I want you to agree to keep him always. Will you agree to that?"

"My! My! but you do make a fellow agree to some hard ones. I invited Uncle Dave to live with me because I wanted him and because I knew that you would want him, and because I wanted to give him a home as long as he lives. An old man without a home is a sad spectacle. I can gladly and cheerfully promise you all you ask along this line. Now what is the next one?"

"There is no next. But I do want you to always remember these two promises: that we will keep our Angelus—and that you will always keep Uncle Dave. I expect to hold you to these two promises just as solemnly as to our marriage vows."

"I shall remember and I shall heed. And now I suppose that we may as well go ahead and arrange that I shall never marry again in case of your death under the penalty of—well of forfeiture of the company of Uncle Dave and that in case of my death you are to have the law library." And he made sweeping motion to the three books on the desk.

"No sir. I have no restrictions to place on you. All those things would be of your natural choosing, and I have no desires or fears."

"Well, I will make a promise voluntarily. In case of your death I shall never marry anyone else and I shall always keep our Angelus. You may tell the angels and St. Peter to watch me and see if I keep the promise."

"Enough of this now. What did you think of Uncle Dave's sermon yesterday?"

"Well, I'll tell you. It was about the greatest sermon I have ever heard and I doubt if it could be equalled by anyone any place. Of course, since you have told me all that you have, I can see that he had a great incentive. But just the same, he had to have it in him before he could deliver a masterpiece like that.

I just lost myself coming to the office thinking about it. He came down here and I asked him all about it and especially about that war prediction. I had him tell me the foundation he had for it and do you know, the old fellow has clear reasoning on the subject. He would be a hero if we should have a World War, anyway soon. He went home with me and spent the day and we talked more about it."

"You don't think anything about that war business, do you?"

"I don't know. I know his reasoning is sound and clear and based on some important facts. We may not have a war, but I say—if we should——."

"Well, let's forget the war. I don't want any soldier husband." At this he strutted around the room, acting the soldier until she stopped him.

"Anyway if I am a soldier, you can be a nurse and if I am wounded I will be sure to have good care."

"John Adams! I just won't have any more of this. I think you are——."

Just then the door opened and Dave came in humming "Home Sweet Home."

"Well, hello folks! What you doing, picking your furniture out of the catalog? Or is this our first client? If it is, I must be consulted about the fee."

"You wouldn't charge me much, would you, Uncle Dave? You must be happy this morning. What was that song you were just humming? It seems to me that it was 'Home Sweet Home.' Is that a favorite of yours?"

"No 'taint. But I do have plenty of reason for making it my favorite. The good Samaritans have been so generous to me. By the way, do you know what is the greatest song in the world?"

"You told us the other day it was 'Sourwood Mountains.' Has some other one copped the grand prize?"

"Oh, you go to grass. I'll just tell you one of these days what it is, when you are not so much of a smarty."



"Come on, Uncle Dave, and tell us now."

"Nope—not today. Busy now with a brief for John."

"Say, Uncle Dave, I have made John make two agreements with me this morning and I believe all agreements should have a witness, shouldn't they, Mr. Lawyer?"

"Yes, I believe they should. I don't charge anything for being a witness and I am a first class witness, too."

"Well, you know I told you about what John and I call our Angelus. You said it seemed to you like a seance. Well, I have made John promise and agree that we will always keep and observe the Angelus no matter where we are or what are the circumstances, no matter if one of us be dead; and that we shall observe this as long as we shall live. Do you bear witness to this agreement?"

"Gladly! And seriously, I think that is a fine little custom of yours. I have thought of it several times since you told me even though I did ridicule it. That was all in fun, you know."

"Well, then we agreed on one other thing. No matter what happens nor what comes or goes, John is to keep you with him as long as you live. Will you witness that agreement?"

"Now you know I have something to say about all that. I might get obstreperous and run away, or go mad, or get drunk, or do many another fool thing so that he could not in justice and good conscience keep me. Then is he to be bound by his bond, my fair Portia?"

"Most certainly he is. You have nothing to say about it. Neither does he. He has agreed to it and that settles it. We just want you to witness the agreement, not argue it."

"Very well. I do solemnly witness, and may I exclaim: 'Another Daniel come to judgment.'"

"And," said John, "we still have another agreement for you to witness. I have agreed that in case of death



of the aforesaid Portia, otherwise known as Nell, that I shall never marry again, and in case of my death she shall inherit our present library, the same to be hers and her heirs forever. Do you bear witness to this agreement, Shylock?"

"Aye sir, so I do. This sure is agreement day. One would think it was New Year's, and we had met to make the usual resolutions."

"Well kind gentlemen, I must be on my way. I am glad to have helped you dedicate the new office. I hope you have a client before the day is over and that he will bring a big retainer—I believe you call it something like that."

"Thank you very much. And you must remember that you are a member of the firm and are required to visit the office occasionally to see that everything is going nicely and to audit the books."

"I may not be a frequent visitor. You know Great Bend has lots of curiosity. But I assure you I shall always be with you in spirit. Goodbye."

She closed the door and was gone. Then both men looked at each other with the same question in their minds.

"What does it all mean?" Dave was the first to speak.

"I never saw Nell act so before. She had all those things she was bound I should agree to today. Of course, I could and did gladly do so. But why did she want me to do it? Do you suppose she has had a quarrel with old Bill?"

"Did she say she had?"

"No."

"Well then she didn't. Nell is a frank, open, truthful girl and she would not keep anything from you and especially now. I think she is just nervous and you know she is very much alone up there and she has thought this out herself and thought it would be nice. I think that is all there is to it."

"I sincerely hope so. But I will confess I don't at all understand. It is not like her."

"Anyway, I guess we have nothing to worry about with her. She is a jewel if ever there was one. By the way, you are going to have a client this afternoon."

"So soon? Who is the unfortunate individual?"

"Calvin Markum, of the Great Bend Coal Company, told me he was coming up to see you about their coal rights on Ezra Whitaker's land. They have been having a little trouble I guess. I put in a good word for you and told him as how you are the best there is on them kind o' cases."

"I was expecting him."

Uncle Dave looked at him in wonder. "Well of all things. I thought I was getting the firm its first case."

"You were, Uncle Dave. But listen."

And then he told him all that Nell had told to him that morning. It had not occurred to Dave that trouble might occur from this first case. At first he was for declining to accept it. But on further thought he agreed with John that he could not afford to decline it if it had merit. It would look too much like he was afraid. Even if it did have the promise of bringing trouble, the bridges must be crossed as they came to them. He would take the case if they wanted him to handle it, and if it had merit. But as they left the office, Dave had a depressed feeling because he felt that something was wrong with Nell. He had that nervous, depressed feeling, like some awful thing was about to happen.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE succeeding few days gave John only occasional glimpses of Nell and usually they were as he saw her flitting between her home and the home of Aunt Fannie. Fortunately, he was a very busy man. What with getting his office arranged for business and with a little bit of business which came in, he was so occupied that he could not give much of his thoughts to the girl, who, as he thought was to be a permanent part of his life. But the days were full for Nell. Yes, they were completely occupied with plans and doings which were strange and unusual to her. She had never had responsibilities before; she had never thought seriously on business and personal problems. But now she was busy with both.

To fight day and night with opposing problems in one's breast, is enough to give the ordinary young lady plenty to do, but entirely to change the course of one's life in a few days, is a task great enough for anyone. When the world was first created, two great opposing forces were set up—light and darkness; and ever since that time they have been contending for supremacy. Where darkness prevails, misery and suffering, ignorance and poverty, crime and lawlessness, immorality and degeneracy, have prevailed. But where light has prevailed, there has been education and happiness, business and order, cheer and good will.

In the lives of individuals, the same forces are forever contending,—right and wrong. With nature and all its varying elements and in all its myriad of sittings, it is hard for youth to select the right path. The contention leads many times to the choosing, even, between life and death. And we have learned that even death



is not the victor in all contentions. It is true that in youth it is a dread and a great fear; in middle life it is avoided and sometimes forgotten; while in old age, when it is just a step away, it is temporized with as the other emotions and contingencies. Sometimes emotions gain the victory, such as hatred or love. Teach as we may, we can never quite fix a rule that will govern human beings in their actions through life. No fond parent can lay down a set of rules for the guidance of a child for his three score years and ten, because it has not been given to any human being to look into the future of either his own life or that of another. No fond mother can gaze on her infant in the cradle and say what kind of a life will come forth. She rather looks on the little life as on a book whose lids are closed. We may guess, we may speculate, in the particular setting that ought to come forth; but on a bright, sunshiny day, a shaft of darkness may change a course in a moment, or a ray of light, brighter even than that of the sun, may change a course from a shadowy path to a bright, triumphant way along which will be happiness and joy for all.

Nell was fighting the great battle of a soul. She fought during the hours of light and darkness. If she was alone in her room at night, the battle waged on. If she was with Aunt Fannie, always there was the discussion and argument as to what was best to do. There were weak moments when it was hard to withstand the emotions of a girl of her age, deciding such a question. If she decided that love must win and was on the verge of going to John and telling him, duty and greater love stepped in and always came off the victor. If she argued with Aunt Fannie that she would never, never give up her love for John, she was confronted with the everlasting plans of how to realize her dream of love. She, in Aunt Fannie, had one who understood; not only a companion who shared her emotions and ideas, but who gave the sympathy so important in her situation.

Day after day they talked and argued the questions in all their various phases. They rode in the hills and together they walked in old familiar surroundings, but always with the one important subject on their minds. There came a day when it was all decided. They had approached the topic from all angles, and always had they come to the same one conclusion on it all.

It was on Tuesday. A miserable day. It had rained all day. The clouds hung low and made one of those gray, dreary days when it is hard for light to prevail. All day long they had been in Aunt Fannie's house and with nothing to intrude, they had threshed over all the old straw and had found the same results as before. They had decided and were as glad as they could possibly be under the circumstances.

"Well, Aunt Fannie, I know it is the right thing to do. I must prepare myself to be away from John for a time. But I wonder how long? I shall still have his love and he shall have all of mine. We shall have our Angelus which will be a comfort, but that is all that we shall have. But then there will be a time when we shall be reunited and then such a time as we shall have for the rest of our lives! I believe the good Lord will be good to us and will aid us in carrying out our plans. The days will be long and the weeks and months will drag, but I shall forever hope that the lives of these people will be touched in such a way that they will see things in a different light and then we may come back here and live in peace. I know we shall win. Tomorrow I shall see William Daniels. I will have to tell him all our plans and arrange for money for our support. I do wish I could tell Dave, but it would not be best. It might spoil it all. He will be with John and will comfort him. That is arranged. I don't know why I did all that but it seemed to me to be the thing to do and I am glad that I did it."

"No. It would never do to tell Dave. He would just have to tell John sometime when he had a very

blue day. See William tomorrow and get it all arranged. You do that while I see to getting a few things together. We can't take much, but there are some things we must have."

"I am going home now and gather up what I want to take. Just a few little keepsakes of mother's and father's will be about all. Tomorrow I will see William and on Thursday let's go early to Grace Hickman's to spend the rest of the week."

As Nell left the house and rode home, somehow she felt that her mind was at a greater ease than it had been for a long time. As she rode into the barnyard and gave her horse to the servant, she saw old Bill talking earnestly to Ezra Whitaker and as Ezra rode away she heard old Bill say: "That's just the way to do it, Ez. If you need me, let me know, but be careful about it. Do just as I tell you." She was glad she had decided as she had. She knew what was coming and she knew that just as sure as fate it would come sometime. Maybe soon, maybe a little longer away, but come it would. And that is why she had decided. By her sacrifice she hoped to avert a tragedy, perhaps many of them.

The father of Nell Henderson had been an industrious, frugal man for that country. His ancestors had been among the pioneers of the country. They followed closely on the footsteps of Daniel Boone in the settlement of the Happy Hunting Ground. In those days it required great bodies of land to support a family, and usually the families were large ones. The settlers claimed such lands as they desired. Some of them perfected their titles and owned the lands, many of them just occupied them and held possession by the time honored rule of force. Some of them located at a particular place, staying a while, and then pushed on into the wilderness, or went back closer to civilization. Most of them could trace their ancestors back to England, Scotland and Ireland. The traits and speech of



these countries were still discernible in these mountain people. Localisms, a century old, had come over with them and were still in vogue. Songs sung on the Highlands of Scotland could still be heard. A "counterpane" still covered the beds and the gentlemen still put "dubbin" on their boots. The English language was all that was heard, and that greatly colored by the language of the isles across the sea.

The Hendersons could claim nobility in their blood. They were leaders in this new land and consequently had the best of the land and all of it they wanted. They settled on large tracts of land and perfected their titles. Feuds had raged for ages in the hills. The Hendersons had become involved and had their share in the crimes and disgraces of the country. But through it all, they had retained their lands and as the country progressed, lands became valuable and the owners became wealthy. The lands that had fallen to Nell's father were many acres. They were rich in timbers and minerals and the soil itself was the best in the country. He had developed much of it to a high state of cultivation and cared for it well. He had been blessed with only one child, Nell. She had been dear to him and he had taken care to provide for her. So at his death all his property had descended to her. He had left a will giving it all to her and appointing William Daniels her guardian. She had always lived with her Uncle Bill and had been well cared for and well raised. Her guardian had taken good care of his trust and her property had increased in value until she was one of the wealthiest in that part of the state. This wealth was not in much money or investments, but in the lands themselves. And now that the timbers and minerals were becoming of great value, it was indeed accumulating rapidly. Her guardian was a thoroughly reliable man, as we have said before, and her properties were sure to be well taken care of.

So she must see William Daniels and tell him all her

plans. It would be no easy task, but the last few days had been nothing but hard tasks for her. She could now be brave and thorough since her plans were all made and decided. Next day, according to her plans, she called on William. He was a man with much of the human sympathy of his brother, Dave. He listened to her plans. He gave her his opinion on the wisdom of them. He suggested some modifications, but he did not try to change her in her plans. It was not for him to do this. It was out of his province, notwithstanding he was her guardian. And then he understood her motive and intended to help her. He drew a will for her leaving her property as she desired in case of her death, and he made with her other arrangements to carry out her plans.

"Tomorrow I will go to Cincinnati and make arrangements with a bank there and will also make arrangements for an account for you in a bank in your new location, so that money will be there at your disposal by the time you get there. I shall not send any money or letters from here. You may rest assured that no one will know anything about you or your plans. I know that you will be safe in the company of your Aunt Fannie and I believe I am doing the right thing in helping you. The power of attorney you have executed gives me power to close up your estate in the courts and still leaves me to handle your property for you as we have talked. Tomorrow I will have the money for you, necessary for your present needs and for your voyage. If I should need to communicate with you, the address you will give me through the bank in Cincinnati will be in my possession. Any communications sent me to the bank there will be immediately forwarded. I shall wish you well in everything and will keep you advised. My letters will all be mailed by the bank from Cincinnati. The one tract of timber will be all that we shall need to sell anyway soon. I

hope it will be all that we shall have to sell before you return."

Nell left his office feeling that she had now done about all that was left her to do in Great Bend. And truly it had been a great deal of business for a girl of eighteen to plan and do in such a short time. Love always finds a way.

On her way to Aunt Fannie's, she saw Ezra Whitaker talking to two lawyers at the corner drug store, and up in John's office she could see Dave and two other gentlemen. She guessed that they were connected with the Great Bend Coal Company. Aunt Fannie was busy with the affairs of her house and with arrangements for her departure.

"I have just a few things here in a bag that I will take with me in the morning. Do you know, dear, that all this is giving me a thrill and I am all excited? It surely will be a great lark."

"Why, Aunt Fannie! This will be no lark. It is too serious to be called anything but a drama. A drama of life. A serious drama of life. And who will win? Who will be the hero and heroine and who will be the villain? No one can tell. But I pray to God that I am taking the right course and that all will be well. I am going up to tell John and Dave goodbye. I just saw Dave in the office. This will be the hardest part of it all. But I must make my nerves as hard as steel and must go through with it bravely. I'll do it."

And away she went to John's office. She found them both talking earnestly. They were alone. The coal men had just left. John had his first case of note.

"Well! Well! Here's the other member of the firm. We thought you had dissolved partnership and that we were to be left to fight the legal battles alone. How is fair Portia today?"

"I am feeling first-rate, Uncle Dave. How's business?"

"Nell, we were just talking over my first case. You were right in your guess that the Great Bend Coal Com-



pany people would come to me. They have just been here and I have taken their case. There is nothing to worry about in that case. Whitaker will not cause any trouble. I believe I can make him see that the coal company will not injure his property a particle and that it will increase the value of it. My! but you look great today. Where have you been all the ages since I saw you last?"

"Oh, just plodding around, Aunt Fannie and I. I didn't want to interfere with business just when you are getting started. Is Uncle Dave a good office girl?"

"Fine. She sweeps out and dusts the library and hunts up business."

"I am going up to Grace Hickman's tomorrow with Aunt Fannie to be gone the rest of the week. Aunt Fannie wants to go and I have been promising to go for a long time. I want you boys to behave as good little boys until my return."

"All right, pard," said Dave. "We'll behave just like as if we were in Sunday-school all the time. I'll make John go to bed early and get up early and will watch him all day."

"Yes. That's what he does now. Especially get up early. I believe that man never sleeps after midnight."

"I am trying to teach him that a great lawyer must have his rest and that if he keeps his eyes shut at night and open in the daytime, he will see more and get ahead faster. Don't you think I am right, Nell?"

"Yes, but you must not be too hard on John. I expect you to keep an eye on him and to care for him always, as per agreement, but don't work him too hard."

"I'll not work too hard. I will be rather busy for a few days with this case. But it will be looking up records and getting posted on things. When are you coming back?"

"I suppose Sunday."

"Hadn't I better ride over and come back with you?"

"It is uncertain just when we shall come, so I believe you better not this time."

"Well, all right. That is the first order from headquarters, Dave."

"Yes! Yes! You'll get a lot o' them. We'll go, though, if we take a notion, won't we?"

"No. Always obey your superior officer."

"John, don't forget our Angelus. Have you been keeping it?"

"You bet I have. Haven't your ears burned every day at sunset? If they haven't, they ought to. That is already a part of my very life and existence."

Dave had gone into the next room and came out whistling. He announced that he was going down on the street and would see them later. He told Nell good-bye. She took his hand and said a lot of things to him, some of them she never remembered afterwards. But chief among them she enjoined him that he must remember all the agreements they had and see that they were all carried out to the letter and that he must take good care of John and see that no harm came to him.

"Why, 'pon my word, you talk as though you were leaving for the North Pole. I am the grand and glorious guardian of all agreements and the body-guard of John Adams, lawyer, the office boy of the firm of Adams, Adams and Daniels, successors to Henderson, Adams and Daniels, and the keeper of the keys to the bottomless pit."

"Well, goodbye and God bless you in all these duties and any other you may have."

Dave thought all this sounded strangely. But he attributed it all to her nervousness over the lawsuit and its probable outcome. He went down the stairs thinking what a serious and peculiar girl she was.

Left alone with John she told him now that he had this case he must be very careful in his actions and in his talk. The mountain people are so clannish and so quick to take up a fight. She would always be in a

worry about it till it was over. They talked awhile and then she arose to go. She took his hand and told him to remember all that he had promised her and that she would live and hope and pray until the day of their marriage. He took her in his arms and as he kissed her, forgot that there ever could be a danger to him or a parting for them.

"When I see you again it will be nearer our wedding day," said Nell, "and I want to see you looking just as handsome and happy as you are now."

"Never fear for me, I shall always be so when you are here."

"They say there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip, but let's hope that we shall avoid all the slips possible. And if there should be a slip, that it will only be a slip and not a miss. I must say goodbye now and heaven bless you always. Daily in our Angelus I'll tell you my thoughts and troubles and you tell me yours."

They parted. Little did John think as he sat at his desk after she was gone, that it would be years and years before he would see her again, or that he would during those intervening years go through a hell on earth, such trouble as tests men, turns gray the hair and unsteadies the hand. Little did he think, sitting there, that only the angels above can see the pathway of our individual lives. Just when we think they will run along together forever, we may be even then at the parting of the ways, and they may diverge never to meet again, or if so, after a long, circuitous way, over stony mountains and through valleys filled with sloughs.

But it is these uncertainties that make the great responsibilities of life. Because we have not the power to pierce the veil, we are given responsibilities, and ambition, and determination, and imagination. We have the five or ten talents for which we must account. And we measure up among our fellowmen, just in proportion as we account for them.



## CHAPTER IX

OLD Bill Henderson was just as mad as he possibly could be. And when he was mad everyone around the house knew what to do—keep away from him. This particular time was a little different, however. There was a seriousness to his madness this time. It was Monday. Grace Hickman's father had just come into town with two horses that had been brought to his place that morning. They were the horses that Nell and Aunt Fannie had ridden to his place on Thursday. The story he told Henderson had made him at first a very mad man, and then the seriousness of the situation began to dawn on him, which made things appear in a different light.

Early that morning, a neighbor had found the two horses in his field, just off the main road toward Great Bend. The saddles were torn and almost demolished. It was plain that they had been on the horses for some time and that they had rolled in them and that they had gone through bushes and timber and had caught and injured the saddles. They were ruined and ready to drop off. This neighbor lived close to the river. The main road from Great Bend ran past his house and on down to the river, crossed it and on to the mountains and across them to the railroad town, twenty miles away. This road crossed the river half a mile from his place and then some three miles down the river, crossed it again. The Hickman farm was off the main road about two miles on a road which ran straight south from the first crossing. The Hickmans lived just at the foot of the mountains and at the edge of the river valley.

Nell and Fannie had been at Hickmans on Thursday, and early Friday morning had started home. The

weather was heavy and it looked very much like a storm. But the girls had said that if a storm did come up they would stop at a neighbor's. They intended to stop there anyway. Shortly after they left it did rain very hard and had rained much harder up the river and it had made a rise in the river making it impossible to cross at the ford for a while. There was no bridge across the river. It was as is usually the case in this part of the country, just a ford. And at times they were very dangerous. The people were never in such a hurry but that they could wait till it was safe to cross. The horses had been found on the side of the river nearest to Great Bend and no one had seen the girls. They had not stopped at the neighbors nor had anyone seen them pass. Mr. Hickman had inquired along the way into town and no one had seen them. They had been seen by several as they went out Thursday morning, but had not been seen going back.

Then the query: had they been drowned trying to ford the river? Such things had occurred. When old Bill heard the story, at first he thought of John and of the feud and of foul play, and he was mad. But as he realized the story in all its seriousness, he was frightened. He informed the rest of his family and they were frantic. They feared that Nell and Fannie had been drowned. Searching parties went out at once. At night time all they had accomplished was the finding of one of the saddle blankets caught on a bush in the river, a half mile below the upper ford. This only tended to confirm the suspicions of the majority who believed both girls had perished. But search as they would up and down the river for miles and miles, not a trace more could be found. The search was continued for days and days.

John and Dave were by this time almost prostrated with grief over the incident. Both had been in the searching party day and night. By the close of the week John was haggard and worn and his eyes had that

sunken look which comes from great nervous strain. He had hoped and had searched. He had prayed as he studied the hills and the probabilities. He knew that Nell was thorough in woodcraft and that she knew the hills, roads and surrounding country as well as any person in all the country. But he could not understand her disappearance and especially since Aunt Fannie was with her. One of them might have been drowned, but it seemed improbable that both of them would be. And still their disappearance was unexplained. The horses were across the river from where they had started Friday morning; the saddles were in terrible condition; but they naturally would be in three days' time; and no one any place around had seen anything of the riders.

Was Nell dead? He had asked himself that question a thousand times and as many times had he answered no, and then weighed the overwhelming evidence against his answer. Every day at sunset he had kept his Angelus. It had been his promise and it was all the comfort he had. And small comfort it was. And yet there seemed to come to him a little degree of satisfaction in this silent hour. As he appealed to Nell during this time, trying to tear away the veil between them and see what was beyond, he seemed to get a little bit of comfort out of the fact that there was no positive evidence that she was dead. Since the beginning of time, the star of hope has kept lovers alive. Indeed, the star of hope has led more people on and on to accomplishments than has anything else. Without it they would have lost faith and fallen by the wayside. John was led by the star of hope and he kept his faith. At times this faith was weak and at the point of disappearing. Had it not been for Dave it would have died out entirely. Dave was the great comforter. He did not always believe all that he said and argued to John, but he thought it was his duty to be optimistic. He realized that John needed strength now more than he had ever needed it before and he was his friend, and that friendship meant giv-



ing all that he could, even to laying down his life if necessary. Now he was glad that he had come to live with John; glad that Nell herself had made the agreement. He would stay on as long as the Lord spared him to live and would pay all that the agreement called for and more.

As he sat at times thinking over the situation, it did all seem weird to him; all the peculiar actions and talk of Nell, all of which were unlike her natural way; this Angelus, which was at least creepy now. He had thought it a nice little custom of theirs when everything was going well, but now that Nell was gone, maybe dead, to see John at sunset sitting alone deep in thought of her, was a little too much. And yet he would not disturb it for the world. He thought it gave John some peace and comfort and if it did, then he must uphold it. And he did so.

Nothing that had occurred within the memory of any man of Great Bend had so stirred the town and country as had this disappearance. The search was carried over into the adjoining counties, and, in fact, over the whole eastern part of the state. At no time did anyone find a clue which amounted to anything. After many days of search and grief, all began to unite on the same opinion that they had been drowned at the ford and that the bodies had been covered up in the sand and mud some place down the river. They might be found and they might not. But the entire town and countryside grieved.

Old Bill Henderson, who loved Nell as his own daughter, had left nothing undone to solve the mystery. He, too, gave up all his hopes and joined in the thoughts of the others. As he watched John in the search and saw the visible evidence of his grief, he was convinced that he had nothing to do with the disappearance. If there had been anything on which to hang a suspicion, he would have harbored the thought that John, on account of the feud, had had something to do in some way or other with

the affair. As it was, he was convinced in his own mind that he was blameless. And old Bill was a man to give the devil his due. At the same time, he was not entirely free from a suspicion of foul play in some way by someone. While he said nothing about his thoughts, he thought just the same, and kept his eyes and ears open. He did not mean wrongfully to accuse anyone and he had suspicions against no one, but if ever he did have, well, God help that person, that's all.

Together John and Dave plodded on, trudging the path of life together. And now the pathway ran deep among the sloughs and bogs. Life was indeed dreary. For them every day was dark and dreary. They now began again to attend to the affairs at the office. John did not have the same interest in business nor the same ambition in life, but kept up a good front. And he did realize his duty to those for whom he did business and gave them the best that was in him. This he would do so long as he did business. He was conscientious in his realization that the business of a client is a sacred trust to a lawyer and must be given the best possible attention. He knew that many times these affairs, perhaps small in nature and worth, meant the all of some poor person. Never did he shirk a duty or neglect his business, even though it was hard, very hard to keep his mind on the subjects at hand. The times after office hours were heavier, even, than those which were full of business. The emptiness of the hours weighed on him. Most of the time was spent at home with Dave. Dave never let him long out of his sight. He gave up his appointments to preach to better keep his trust. And business did prosper. John had business to attend to. He had the coal case and other business came to him and for a young man he was busy. The business of the office was discussed at home. One evening as they sat talking of various matters, Dave said:

"Today I was talking with old Bill Henderson and he

said you ought to drop that coal case, and I told him you never would do it, but that you had them licked to a standstill. He talked a long time, arguing that you would get people down on you if you tried to take advantage of our good people on some technicality. I told him you did not consider it a technicality but a right of your clients, bought and paid for. Well, the conversation ended by him getting a little hot. He said he was not interested, only that he hated to see his friends beat out of their rights, and wanted to know if I knew Judge Perkins from Lexington was to defend the case. I told him I did not, but I thought we could entertain the Judge just as well as anyone. He said he hoped there would be no trouble come from the case and I told him I saw no reason why there should be any. But I am just wondering what he meant by that. Old Bill does not come out openly and start trouble, but he is a trouble maker, just the same."

"Oh, I see no reason for any trouble. How can there be any? Who would start it? We will try the case. It will be a short trial. It is mostly a question of law. We will beat them easily. If they want to do so they can appeal and we shall have to try again, but this is not a case to cause any fight or trouble."

"It don't take much here to cause trouble. For a while I thought old Bill was a changed man after Nell went away, but I am convinced that at heart he is just as mean as ever. And if her property was not out of his hands, he would soon convert it to his own use. He is just the same old bad egg."

"Now, now, Dave, let's give him credit for better intentions than that. Let's just play that he is a changed man and that he is a good citizen and a friend of ours."

"Good Lord! That will be some play. But just as you say. Just the same I am going to keep my eyes open all the time."

"In about a month we shall have this case tried and



a decision in the local courts, and then there will be no further trouble about it. If it is appealed it will be away from here and will not irritate anybody.”

But it was longer than a month before the case came to trial. Judges and officers of the law in the mountains of Kentucky at that time had friends and could be approached as friends. If a friendly turn could be made by delay of a case, it could easily be done. Many delays had been had before and many more would be had. So a year dragged away before John got his case heard. One thing or another came up from time to time to cause delay. It was still a pending case and at times he heard some ugly talk. Or rather, it was Dave who heard it first. None of this bothered John. He kept on in the even tenor of his way. Old Bill Henderson was an influential man. He had influence in politics and circuit judges had to be elected and he always helped. A word from him as to his desires was enough to cause delays. He hoped by delay to cause enough loss, and probable loss, to cause a settlement of some kind.

## CHAPTER X

**I**N THE preparation for the trial of the case of the Great Bend Coal Company vs. Whitaker, it was necessary that John get in touch with many old residents of the county who knew the lines of lands, customs and occupation of the different lands. In so doing, he was taken at different times to all parts of the county. Dave was his constant companion on all these trips. They were invariably made on horseback. Had there been another person in the party he would have been happy. Had Nell been spared to him, his happiness would have been complete. As it was, he did have, for him, many pleasant times in the hills. There is no tonic to the man of the mountains like a trip into the hills. To the mountaineer of Kentucky there is nothing quite so dear as his old Kentucky hills. To ride along the cool paths, across the hills, gives him a real pleasure. And so it was for John, and especially so since he was in a mellow mood.

It was just a year since the disappearance of Nell. The afternoon of which we speak was beautiful and sunshiny. John and Dave had been farther into the mountains than usual. It had been a long trip. They had been gone three days and were returning home. They had seen on their trip, people who had never been outside of the county; who had never seen or known any of the modern conveniences of life. It was like going back a century. They had penetrated as it were into the forest primeval, because there were great bodies of forests from which not a tree had been taken. On an excursion of this kind, one gets close to nature. In the fastness of the mountains, one finds the cool mountain

streams, shaded by the great oaks, beeches, and the tall hickory trees, characteristic of the country. The very mosses of the sidehills and along the streams make one cool and carry him back till he feels the very blood of childhood in his veins. He longs for the refreshing sleep of youth. No tonic does quite so much for a person. If there is any land of perpetual youth, the mountain forests, with their streams and all their natural beauty, come nearest to qualifying.

John and Dave were nearing home. They were coming down the old State road which crossed the mountains up the creek from Great Bend. This was the same road up which Dave and Nell had gone a little over a year before. And John had gone up that same road that very same day. As they turned down the mountain from the summit where the road crossed, they had a view of the valley and creek to the west, which made John's heart ache. This is the same scene on which he had looked that beautiful day a year ago. As they came further along they neared the very same spot at which he had left the road and had been called to by Nell. When he came to the place he turned off the road into the bushes, saying:

"Come on, Dave, let's go up on the rocks and rest a while before we go on."

Dave was not surprised. He would have been surprised had he not done this very thing. He knew and had known for some hours that John was in a very soft mood and he also knew that they would pass this spot. He expected that they would stop. It was here that John had realized his dream with Nell; here for the first time his lips had met hers in the sealing of the bargain for life; here together they had gazed over valley and hill; here they had dreamed and planned; and here again he would think and keep his Angelus.

As they mounted the rock at the top of the hill and seated themselves where the three of them had sat before, John uttered no word, but his tears, as they slowly



stole down his cheeks, spoke more than words could tell. Dave had seen enough of life to know that tears are the relief of passion, that they give relief when nothing else can. He had learned before that in the presence of tears and especially the tears of love, that silence is the better judgment. So he sat and gazed on the scenery and thought, and his thoughts were those of love and reverence for the same person of whom John was thinking.

It was a long time before the silence was broken. In fact, they sat there until the sun had crept down to the tree tops in the far west. As the edge of the beautiful sun touched the trees and seemed to rest and hold there for a moment before dipping into the daylight of the other hemisphere, John was in the silence and devotion of his Angelus. In a few moments it would be sunset, and sunset for him meant more than any other time. It seemed to him that were it not for this quiet hour, these few moments to himself, life could not be endured. He had learned to love it more and more and to get more out of it. It was indeed his hour of prayer. He had tried to believe that Nell was just away and that he was talking to her across the miles. He had tried to forget that there was a universe between them; that she was awaiting him on the elysian shores. He had never talked much with Dave about his Angelus since Nell went away, but all that he had talked was that he firmly believed in the efficacy of prayer and the communion of souls. He had not gone into much explanation, nor had Dave given any criticism. Whatever his thoughts on the subject, he had kept them to himself. They sat there at the top of the mountains this evening as the sun went down. Dave was thinking what a sad case it was. Here was a strong man tied to a sorrow which was weighing him down. And yet he would not change it. As he thought on it all, he could not suggest a change. He would not see John in love with any other person. That would seem like sacrilege. It seemed to him that he would prefer

that he go on loving and idolizing Nell and communing with her in his Angelus.

All at once John jumped up. He had a wild stare in his eyes. It was as if he had been touched by a hand in the dark. He could hardly speak. Clearly he was frightened, but with the fright was mixed a pleasure.

"Dave! Dave! I have heard from her. She is living. She told me so. She is well and hopes that I am safe and well. Oh, my God! Where is she? Where can she be? I know that she answered. I know that it was she."

"Now, John, you are exciting yourself. It is the setting. It was here a year ago that you sat. She was with you. You have thought too hard and too much today. I hope that it is the gospel truth that you say, but let's be going now, it is dark."

"Oh, you don't know the feeling. I am so happy. Now to find her. She is some place on this earth and there is no place I shall not search—I must find her. It was the Angelus you know, and just at this time she is thinking of me. We just had the same thoughts and they flew across the miles and mind has met mind. It was a flash of mind to mind. You can't understand, old partner, how I feel. I know now that souls can commune and that just now it was two living souls in living bodies that were communing. She cannot be dead. We shall find her."

"I am glad that you have had this pleasure. I am glad that you have continued to commune with Nell at the sunset. She told you that she would always be with you in this hour. The influence has been good. I believe this is only the intoxication of the hour. But even so, it is beneficial to you. You must not set too much store on finding her. Do not build yourself up to a disappointment. I am with you even unto the end in whatever you do in search, but I pray you, please do not build yourself up to a disappointment. It would be too much for us both."

"Just the same, I am a happy man. We shall find the dearest soul on earth, the soul so pure and undefiled that she is permitted to communicate with me in her absence. I know now that I shall have word from her again. We must keep this matter all a secret. Just you and I. But the world is brighter for me tonight than it has been for many months."

They descended to their horses which were tied in the same place they had been a year before. They mounted and rode towards home. John was in that happy delirium in which love and love alone holds sway. He had realized a dream. Ever since she went away, he had hoped and prayed that he might have some sign, some little bit of an indication that she still lived. It had come to him in a way that he was thoroughly convinced. He would make plans. She still lived and would continue to commune with him and finally they would be united here on earth. They would be happy yet. To say that he was happy did not express it. He bubbled forth in his speech with Dave as they rode along. His plans were forming. They were not complete. In fact, they changed from moment to moment as he speculated. He groped in the dark. He knew not where to start or where to go.

As he dreamed on and as he planned, Dave gave thought to many things. He could see what beckoned men on to great things; what carried them to the heights of success; or what drove them down to the depths. It all depended on the character and the strength of the individual. If there was character and strength, the road was upward to the heights. If there was weakness and lack of faith, then it was down. And he thought that the greatest prayer any man can offer is for strength and more strength. And as they rode along he was offering that prayer for John. He even dared to hope that his vision, as it were, might be true. But he thought less of it than he said. He did not believe in these theories. He had read and heard of mental



telepathy but had never given it much credence. He did not know. But if the thing, whatever it was, was good for John, he was willing to believe it or practice it, or in fact, do anything.

It was in this kind of mood that they reached home. John was in a high delirium; he was on the topmost peaks of joy. A face as vivid to him as life was beckoning him on. It was painted on the very air. He gloried in the fact that the vision was for him alone, that it was not now given to any other human eyes to see. He saw and saw clearly. He was happy. He told Dave so and proved it by his actions. Nor did he stop when they reached home, but far into the night did he insist on talking over his joy and making his plans. It had been the day of days for him. When Dave had fallen asleep from his weariness, with John still talking, he realized that he was imposing on his good friend. They retired—Dave to sleep—John to toss all night in his ecstasy.

## CHAPTER XI

**I**N THE hills of eastern Kentucky, Court Day is the great event in the county. There is little else to bring the people together and as a consequence it is the meeting place for most business. People who come to town on no other day, can be found there on that day. Appointments are made for the transactions of business on that day. Everybody comes in. There are few means of conveyance except the trusty old saddle horses and on this day they are as thick as automobiles in modern cities.

In Great Bend, the Courthouse was a large, brick building. It was modern enough in its architecture and was a very creditable structure for the town. It was in the center of the little village. There were only two streets in the town. Main street, as it was called, ran along to the west side of the Courthouse, and First street, the other thoroughfare, was the old County road and it was on the north side of the Courthouse. So this palace of justice and business of the mountaineers stood on the corner formed by the crossing of these two thoroughfares. To the east stood the jail, and to the south a business house, if such it may be called. It was an implement store and a blacksmith shop. Back of the town, to the northeast, was Sunset Hill.

Court convened always on a certain Monday in the month, the fourth Monday, and every person in all the county knew the day. On this day could be seen sights peculiar only to the mountains. It was a common sight to see a tall, lean mountaineer riding into town, with his wife riding behind. She was coming in to trade a little at the store and to visit some relative. They would not go to the hotel or to a restaurant, but would go to some

friend or relative's house and be welcome. Thus do the people of these parts visit and exchange their hospitality. Maybe one of the children is brought along and he finds conveyance in front of his "pap" on the trusty nag. They come in droves, maybe as many as twenty-five riders together. They come from all directions. Early in the day, the entire county and all its precincts are well represented. If there is a particular case involving the citizens of some locality, all of the people from that locality take their side in this case. They cannot be neutral, but favor one side or the other and so express themselves, many times very actively, even though they have no interest save that of a community affair.

On account of this pernicious custom and habit, much trouble is engendered which may on any Court Day ripen into trouble and even bloodshed. It has been said of these mountaineers that they crave excitement, and if it is not forthcoming in any other way, they create it themselves. In these affairs, one is reminded of nothing so much as the forest primeval, where the animals contend for superior strength and for the survival of the fittest. It is with great interest that we read of the strength and power of the great and how he destroys the wolf. It is equally as interesting to know that the wolves, out of necessity for self-preservation, organized themselves into packs and in that way destroyed this more powerful enemy. Such incidents have been imitated and duplicated by man. But be it said to the credit of these mountaineers, that they are not cowards; they play fair and shoot straight. With a little liquor on hand, any Court Day is calculated to give plenty of thrills to the curious and interested onlooker.

Monday was Court Day in Great Bend and Great Bend was a town typical of the mountains. The great coal case was to begin. The clans had arrived early. From his office across from the courthouse, John and Dave could see what to them seemed all of the inhabi-



tants of that part of the county in which Ezra Whitaker lived. Off to one side, he could see old Bill Henderson earnestly talking with a group of the more influential ones. He was busy and that meant that he was giving all his influence to a matter which did not in the least concern him. His interest was only one of enmity for the Adamses and for John Adams in particular. He was kindling a fire, or rather, he was nursing the flames of a fire already started. He was giving them his advice.

John was ready for trial. He had prepared his case well. He had taken special pains to prepare it on facts alone. No feeling of enmity would creep into the matter from his side. The facts and evidence were so plainly on his side, that he would make a record and stand on that. He had advised his client that he would do this and that he did not expect to secure a favorable verdict, but would win on appeal. All this was satisfactory to them because they had learned to respect the judgment of John Adams and to love him as a coming great and good man.

As they stood there waiting for the great bell in the tower of the Courthouse to call them to Court, he thought what a pity it was that these good people were so constituted that they must keep up their custom of obeying the laws of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Many a good man had been cut down in his prime as a sacrifice to this law of revenge. He could see gray heads in the crowd, who in good environments would have made their mark in the world. Many would have been cultured gentlemen in their old age. He felt a tinge of shame for these, his people, who had not progressed as they should, for he knew that their hearts were right; that underneath they were as fine thinking people as ever lived and that they were full of that quality of sympathy and human kindness which makes men; and that except in their feudal divisions their mercy was of that quality to make them an ad-

mired people. But this awful vindictiveness kept them forever meeting the issue and continuing the war. Once in a while there would be one of the new generation who had the proper idea of things and he would vow to end the war for his clan, and a great good would be done. John Adams was one of those right thinking young men who had resolved to do all he could along this line.

"John, I have seen men lose their lives on days like this, when there were so many people in town. This crowd don't look good to me. I am afraid that we shall see trouble. May God grant that I am wrong in my suspicions, and give us peace."

"Well, Dave, we have kept our skirts clean in this case, and I shall do all in my power to avert any trouble. I have told the sheriff that I shall have nothing to do with any row, nor will I use any feeling in my arguments. In fact, I shall not be the aggressor in any way."

"I know all that, but Bill Henderson is right now stirrin' up all the trouble he can. If the devil ever had a good emissary, it is Bill."

Just then the great bell boomed forth the call to Court and everyone moved toward the Courthouse. When they were in, the great hall was filled to overflowing. The judge, a young spare built man, was on the bench. The clerk was at his desk and many attorneys were inside the railing assigned to them. John and Dave came in and with difficulty did they reach the plaintiff's table. When Dave had deposited on the table the books he was carrying for John, he retired outside the railing and became a bystander along with the crowd. After a few minor motions and orders, the judge ordered the clerk to call the first case for trial. Well did he know what it was and so did every person in the house. The clerk then called the case of the Great Bend Coal Company vs. Whitaker. There were four attorneys actively engaged for the defendant.

They included the oldest and best lawyers at the bar. The defense was in charge of an old man who was a typical mountain lawyer. He was sharp and shrewd, a reader of human nature and he knew the mountain people to the smallest nicety. He would take every advantage and play upon every sympathy. Many a time had he turned a case in his favor because of the fact that he did know mountain people and their traits and character.

Illustrating his shrewdness, he had one time been defending a young man for murder in one of the far mountain counties. A young man sent by the attorney general from the Bluegrass, was acting as Commonwealth's attorney and prosecuting the case. He had not been long out of school. He was well educated and not realizing his disadvantage in doing so, was using language too "highfalutin" for the mountaineer. The defendant was charged with shooting from "ambush" and killing a man. In the course of his argument, he had commented at length on the "despicable" and "diabolical" crime and especially dwelt on the fact that the deceased had "been shot from ambush," and what a depravity it was to "shoot from ambush." He scathingly rebuked the mountaineer who would stoop so low as to commit a crime in this way.

When it came time for the old mountain lawyer to make his plea for the defense, he had already read in the faces of the mountain jury that they were not in sympathy with this young lawyer who was talking over their heads. He well knew the feeling existing between the mountaineers and the people from the Bluegrass. So he proceeded to call their attention to this splendid young man who had been sent up from the Bluegrass to prosecute the simple mountain boys who were raised in the hills and were proud of it. "These boys of ours who never struck a defenseless foe; who are our boys; etc." And then proceeded: "Gentlemen, you know that there is no evidence that this boy is



guilty. You know that this young attorney friend of mine has not stated the facts as they appear before you. You and I know this country better than he does. We have hunted 'possum all over every branch in this county. He tells you that this man was shot from ambush along the road on Wolf Creek. I leave it to you gentlemen. You have everyone of you been all over Wolf Creek and you know just as well as I do that there ain't nary ambush on Wolf Creek. There is plenty of sassafras and pawpaw but you know there ain't nary ambush up there." The jury freed the defendant. The shrewd lawyer had talked their language and knew their natures and limitations.

It was a custom in the hill counties that every attorney in the county must take sides in a case whether he was employed or not. He could at least offer his suggestions and advice. They had learned from experience which many of them remembered, that John Adams tried his own cases and usually they refrained from "being on his side." In the coal case, most of them were lined up on the side of the defense and were ready to give all the help they could. This did not bother John in the least. He had become accustomed to it long ago.

The selection of the jury began. John made quick work of his side of it because he was not depending on a jury to win his case. The defense at once showed by their lengthy examination of each juror, that they expected to arouse all the feeling that they could. When the jury was selected at the close of the second day, the opening statements of the counsel began. John made a clear, concise and short statement of the facts which he expected to prove. His entire statement was one which gave the jury to understand that he relied solely on fact, had no enmity, nor did his clients. He asked them to listen patiently to the evidence and then if they would act solely upon that evidence, he would leave his case in their hands, confident and satisfied that justice would be done.

"The typical old lawyer" made the statement for the defense and it was a scathing denunciation of the coal company and everyone connected with it. He vilified everybody; no one escaped; his client's property was being stolen from him by main force and if they were allowed to do this in this instance, there was no telling who would be the next victim. It was sure no one could feel safe. Such men as these cared not for the rights of the mountain people. They would usurp any and every right; they would take property by any force; they next would invade the home; they were worse than thieves in the night; they had no honor and no principle. "Gentlemen of the jury, they belong to that class of people who would ride a jackass in the garden of Eden and tie him to the tree of life." He raved on in this fashion for hours. When he had finished, he had the stage well set for his defense; and his defense might include murder; it surely would incur a lot of enmity and ill-feeling which would show itself some place at some time.

Then the introduction of evidence began and dragged along for days. It was an easy matter for John to introduce the records showing title in his clients and to prove a few minor points to make his case, but the cross-examination was an ordeal for every witness. When he had rested his case, then the defense introduced witness after witness to prove possession, undisputed possession and usage, custom, relinquishment, abandonment, and every other thing that would cause prejudice and feeling. Through it all, John controlled himself in a way that was most commendable. Not once did he lose control of himself. Not once did he get bitter or abusive, although many times he would have been justified in so doing. But he was determined that nowhere in the record would be found an abusive word of his. Through all the days and nights, old Bill Henderson was a busy man. He suggested to this one and advised that one and every day he grew more bitter against John.

On Wednesday, the second week of the case, the evidence was almost finished and Court adjourned for the day. The defense announced that they had one more witness to call the next morning and after that would rest their case. Then the arguments would be made.

The little town for many a month had not had so much excitement. Business throughout the county had been suspended. All wanted to "see the fun." The town had been full to overflowing all the time. They were confident that before it was over something would occur.

Howard Adams, John's brother, had been in his office for a long time and helped him in many ways on his cases and following his usual custom was helping him with this one. He made notes, ran errands, carried books and did many other things. He was a young man of the jolly happy-go-lucky type. Everybody liked him and he was not given to causing trouble or getting into any. John had cautioned him particularly about this case and his desire to avoid any feeling or bitterness, and Howard had co-operated to the full extent. On this particular Wednesday night he had gone to the postoffice after supper and was on his way to the office where they were to get ready for the next day. Down the street from the office and in front of a store, he was passing a crowd of a dozen men and heard someone mention John's name with an oath and a threat. When he looked he saw that the person talking was old Bill Henderson. Bill was standing with his back to him and did not know that he was there. He went on with his tirade against John and how he ought to be run out of the town for trying to take honest people's property. He was a poor citizen and "By God! if nobody else will run him out I will." Old Bill saw expressions on the faces of some of the men that caused him to turn for the cause. He saw Howard standing a few feet away listening.



"You damn black Adams sneak, what are you standing there eavesdropping for?"

"Why, Bill, I am just part of the crowd listening to your sermon."

"Well, you and that damn brother of yours won't listen to many more sermons in these parts. You are about through and I aim to finish you now."

As he uttered these words he jumped back and crouched for all the world like a wild animal, ready to spring on its prey. The crowd was made up of Bill's sympathizers and Howard knew it. He also knew that Bill was armed, for he always went that way. He was a deadly shot despite his age. Howard was a young man and so far as physical strength, he could handle Bill and another one like him, but he was not a gun fighter. He had little time to think, but he knew it was death to run and saw not a friendly face in the crowd, and old Bill not more than six feet away. Bill reached for his gun and as Howard saw it flash from his hip pocket, he dived for Bill's legs. As he did so, Bill fired. Howard had acted so quickly that he had grabbed Bill's legs before the shot was fired but not in time to save himself. The impact had knocked Bill forward and the bullet went through the fleshy part of Howard's left thigh. But quick as a flash he had thrown Bill on his back and grabbed his wrist and was twisting the pistol from his hand. Due to his superior strength, this was the work of only a second. In the twist, he had wrenched Bill's arm so hard that he was writhing in pain. Quick as a tiger and about as vicious, Howard was on his feet with the pistol and was in front of the crowd.

"Now, you yellow curs, I know when I am among enemies. If any man makes a move I shall blow him to Hell. Bill, get up, you old devil. I was not bothering you. I am not going to bother you now if you behave. But damn you, you can't run over me. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I'd plug you good if it wasn't for

your old gray head. It's so damn mean it ought not to be protection for you."

As he stood there powerful in his strength, they all knew that he meant just what he said. So no one moved. The excitement brought a crowd and among the crowd the sheriff and the judge who was trying the case. As they came up, Howard said:

"Judge McGuire, I turn over to you and the sheriff, old Bill Henderson who has just shot me in the side. Here is his pistol which I took away from him. We had no quarrel, but these men here are all Bill's friends. I guess Bill's arm is hurting him a right smart and you better help us up to Dr. Parker's office so that we can get fixed up. You take his gun, Mr. Sheriff, so he won't hurt himself."

The blood was forming a little pool at Howard's feet and his clothing was getting soaked with it. The sheriff took charge of Bill and led him toward the store and the judge cared for Howard, getting him to the doctor's office as fast as he could. But there was not much excitement in the crowd. Most any one of them could have shot Howard down, but it was Bill's fight and they waited too long. The strength of youth was too much for the man of years. The news soon spread over the town. John rushed over to the doctor's office to find that Howard was not so badly hurt. It was only a flesh wound which would lay him up for a short while. But he feared for what might be the result of the night's work. He knew that Bill had boys who would nurse their wrath. And he knew the natural result was to obey their law "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth."

As soon as he had found that Howard was not seriously injured and had seen to it that he was properly cared for, he hurried out of the doctor's office into the street and down towards the scene of the trouble. He was looking for Bill. When he neared the place he saw Dave on the sidewalk. The people gathered around began to move nervously, for they thought he sought Bill

and that there would be more trouble. He saw Bill in the store and in he went, and straight up to him. No one stopped him, but many were ready for him. As he went he said:

"Bill, I am not going to harm you. I want to talk to you. You shall talk to me. You know my word is good and I am telling you in the presence of all these friends of yours, that I will not harm a hair of your head. Come back here in the office and let's you and I have a talk."

To the amazement of all, old Bill said:

"Your word's good and I don't like you, but damn you I'll talk to you. What in hell you got to say?" and back into the office with John he went.

An hour from that time they were still in there. Those waiting outside could hear them conversing. At about this time one of Bill's boys, who had heard of the trouble, came rushing in and unceremoniously entered the office stating in a loud voice what he was going to do to the Adams tribe. In a short while he was quieted down and after a little without a word of news, but still mad, came out of the office. Would wonders ever cease? The crowd stood with open mouths. Never before had such actions taken place in that town. Why didn't someone do something? Could any son take such an insult to his parent? And all the other expressions which a curious crowd can utter. After another long wait the two men came out. John was quiet and in full control of himself and old Bill still favoring his lame arm said:

"Boys, John and me have had a talk and we are goin' home tonight. We shall have somethin' to say tomorrow. There will be nothin' doin' tonight."

With this he called his son and they went up the street toward home, while John went to his office. The crowd was left to wonder what had happened. When they were in the office, Dave asked John what had taken place between him and old Bill. John told him that he had talked to Bill as he had never talked to anyone in all his life. He had tried to show him what a continuation of this



trouble for only one day would mean; that it would be like a firebrand in a powder house. No one could stop it if it was allowed to start. He had appealed to Bill for the love of his sons and his family and for the friends and neighbors who would be drawn into the terrible vortex of trouble, and finally for the sake of Nell, whom he loved and whom he knew to be absent for the sole reason of saving trouble and that he believed her to be living some place—yes, living for him, and that he intended to find her and marry her. He told Dave that old Bill had softened under his arguments and appeals and they had argued it out with the result that Bill had agreed to stop any spread of hostilities on account of the incident and had agreed to take his son home and to talk with John again next day and before anything further was done.

“Old Bill’s word is good and he will keep it. Tomorrow I shall talk with him a little and exact another promise from him for a further time on account of being so busy in this trial. I shall speak tomorrow afternoon or next morning in this case and I shall make a speech that will wake up this community and will heal this breach if it does not get a verdict for me. I cannot expect a favorable verdict from that jury, but we shall win the case on appeal anyway and I am going to make a speech for my county and its people.”

“Glory be to the everlasting God! I know you’ll do it. The devil and all his angels can’t stop you. May you have power and strength and courage and success, my boy.”

## CHAPTER XII

**T**HERE had been excitement in Great Bend, but never of the kind that existed this morning. In times past, even to the oldest inhabitant, many had seen the town crowded to overflowing and the excitement of a fight or an expected fight make the crowd gather and mill around with almost a joyous attitude. It was as if they were awaiting the show to begin. But this was not the kind of excitement that prevailed on this morning. There is that tense feeling in everyone in a mob that becomes almost a living monster, surcharged with awful force, a force that is bound down and held in check. Just a little jar will set it off and a carnage of death ensues. There is more or less noise and brag and boast in the spirit of the mob. It takes that to keep up spirits. It is the hellish spirit of the demon bound and surging to get loose. It is the mind of man perverted for the moment to regret forever afterwards the deeds that are done.

But on this particular morning there was none of that. Great Bend held her breath, and held it tensely. She waited. She knew that something was to come off and she dreaded what it might be. Very early in the morning, the town was crowded as it had seldom been before, because the news of the trouble the night before had spread to the farthest confines of the county. They knew that John Adams was to make his argument in the noted case of the Great Bend Coal Company. All knew the feeling engendered during the trial. They also knew that it had been intended by those who had concerned themselves in the case, to cause all the enmity possible so that it would lead to what they intended—revenge. They intended that someone else should start

the trouble and inflict the revenge. They knew the spirit of men excited, and especially men of the mountains. They well knew the result. They had planned it well. And there was every reason to believe that the blow would be struck within a few hours. The mountain men, on the side of the defense, had nursed their wrath to keep it warm, and all that they needed was that jar which would set off the charge that had been so well planted. This was not the first time that such things had been planned. It was not the first time that innocent people had been excited to do the dirty work of people with a grudge. Human beings have resorted to this practice since the morning of time, and probably always shall do so.

But as we said before, the excitement which prevailed was not of the mob kind, nor was it of that exuberant kind that tells to all that it is glad that something is about to happen. But it was of that hushed still kind; the kind that is best expressed by holding the breath; the nervous kind that is evidence of a possession of some great information appalling in its magnitude. It was the hushed stillness that accompanies death. It was as if a great damp had spread itself over the crowd and paralyzed it. There was no rushing around. There was no loud talking. If people conferred together in groups, it was in whispers. If opinions were expressed, they were very quietly said. It was as if a powder magazine was underneath and everyone knew it.

What was the cause of all this? It would not have been the case the day before. Something had happened that the people of Great Bend could not understand. They did not know "where they were at." They knew that John Adams was not a fighter. They knew that Bill Henderson was. No one had ever seen Bill Henderson welch before. They guessed that he would not do so this time. They believed that Howard Adams had fight in him. They knew that the Henderson boys did. They loved John Adams because he had always



been one of them and had made them respect him by his fair methods and his impartiality. No matter on what side they were, all silently hoped that John would win. This feeling was the cause of the hush over Great Bend on the day that he was to make his argument for the plaintiff in a case he knew to be right.

John and Dave knew the feeling. They also knew that the countrymen were holding their breath. They were ready for just such action which was a surprise to all others. John knew that he was going to make the effort of his life and Dave was secretly praying for strength for him to exceed his wildest desires in this direction.

When the bell in the old Courthouse called them to Court, the great room was already filled to its capacity. The judge entered and took his seat while the sheriff in a loud tone cried: "O! Yez! O! Yez! The Honorable Circuit Court is now in session and everyone is admonished to silence." John and Dave came in. Just inside the railing of the bar, old Bill Henderson was seated and there being an empty seat beside him, Dave availed himself of it, while John took his place at the trial table. They got at once to business. No one cared to delay. The defense had no further witnesses to call and at once rested their case. Next came their arguments.

Calmly John began the argument for the plaintiff. It was evident from the start that he intended to state the bare facts of his side of the case and to review the evidence, but it was also just as evident that he was talking to the citizens of Woodruff County instead of the jury in the box. He reviewed the case in a masterly way. He asserted that the weight of the evidence was with his side. He prayed for a verdict for his client. And then he launched forth in a plea for law and order and peace and quietude in the hills of Kentucky. It was his home that he loved so well; that they all loved so well. Oh! those old Kentucky hills, how they all

loved them! How her people had become great as they had taken advantage of the great American opportunity! On and on he went. He held his crowd and knew that he was holding them. He had that feeling as he looked into their faces, which every orator has when he can feel that the crowd is drawing closer and closer to him as he speaks. He knew full well that he was accomplishing what he desired. At the end of three hours he closed in a passionate plea, saying in part:

"In the very beginning of time God created light and darkness. When they were created he divided them. He made the day and the night. We have been fighting ever since to keep them separated. If we relax a moment, darkness creeps up and shuts out the light. Not only have we fought to keep the elements apart, but we have had to fight to keep the light of education from being snuffed out entirely. As the light of education grows and shines forth, the darkness of ignorance recedes. But we dare not relax a moment or it comes back stronger than ever. The foundation principle of this great American Government is that everyone is created equal. Everyone has his rights and his chance. The caste system is foreign to American soil. We are proud to tell our children that a humble birth is no stamp of inferiority, and that from the lowliest home may rise the nation's greatest man. We know that from the very doorstep of the lowliest cabin in the hills, there is a sure and certain pathway that stretches away to fame and that the feet of every boy in that home are welcome along this pathway. We know that along this unpretentious way have passed our nation's greatest sons to exalted positions in the nation and in the business world. We know that the Giver of all things reached His hand to a lowly hut in our own Kentucky and placed it on the head of a barefoot boy and made him rise by his own efforts to the chief magistracy and to permanent and lasting fame. And the great, sad

Lincoln had more thought for others than he had for himself.

"His was a belief that all were created free and equal. His was not a survival of the fittest, but he believed in making all fit to survive. He accorded to every man, every right that he claimed for himself. His was the life and spirit that carried further in this land of ours the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, than any other man, be he priest, minister or layman. His was a simple belief which embodied every good principle of the sermon on the Mount. Not only did he advise and advocate all this, but he practiced it. He lived it in his daily life. He believed that it was wrong to set one man against another. He believed that dissension caused in this way was the seed of discord which would harm our nation more than any other one thing. He believed in union and cooperation and success that would follow.

"And I say to you, that I would rather commit any crime against the laws of my land, dear as is that land to me, and loyal as I am to the laws of my land, or against the laws of God, than to set one man or one set of men against another. That, to me, is the greatest of all crimes. It is from such crimes as these that this world has been fighting since the very morning of time. Untold millions of human beings have gone down to their deaths because of this crime. Factions, cliques and clans are made up of individuals. All individuals have rights and duties and are amenable to the laws of the land. We all know those human coyotes who dip their fangs into blood of human beings and counsel and advise the enforcement of the law of 'an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,' but let me say to you that that law is dead. We all know persons who nurse their wrath to keep it warm, and we know that they are dangerous men to society. They say if we are wronged we must wrong someone else to get revenge. If our rights are invaded we must invade the rights of another to get



even. They do not resort to the laws of the land, but take the law into their own hands. They are both judge and jury. But I say to you, the spirit of brotherly love is the one that is winning in this good old world of ours. This world is old. It has rolled on for many a day. It has seen generations come and go. And since the time of Christ it has been steadily growing better as the light has crowded back the darkness. The savages who inhabited this 'Happy Hunting Ground' of ours and roamed over the very spot on which we stand, believed that might makes right. All savages have believed that. But civilization has taught us different. We know that we must give and take; that we must respect the rights of others; that laws are made to be obeyed; that in obeying them we may find a hardship now and then, but we also know that there is no permanent good that can come to us without a corresponding sacrifice.

"There was a day of sin in the world so great that the people would not make the sacrifice necessary to save it, and Christ made the sacrifice for all. Since that time we have known that the spirit of brotherly love is the spirit that is invading the whole world. Rather than any calamity overtake me, yea, even death itself, than that I be guilty of putting one man against another which would result in enmity, quarrels and death.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I know not what your verdict will be. God give you strength to do what you deem to be right. But I pray to the Almighty God above, that enmity and spite and the spirit of the feud may be forever banished from the hills of eastern Kentucky, the land I love so well. May God inspire these good people of ours with a spirit of brotherly love—that love for one another that causes men to bear with one another's faults; that love which causes men to fight out their differences with reason instead of with pistols; that love which you all have so often heard explained and recommended to us on Sunset Hill by our own beloved Dave Daniels. And now I am finished.

May the God of love and friendship and good feeling be with you all, even unto the end."

As he finished and turned to his table, there was a scene never before witnessed in that Courthouse and seldom in any other. There swelled forth such a shout of applause with so much earnestness that the sheriff was entirely powerless to secure order. Up rose old Bill Henderson and grasped John's hand. He stood there with the tears streaming down his face. No longer was he filled with that spirit of revenge, that much was apparent, and then he spoke:

"My God, John, I am seventy-four years old, and it has taken me all these years to learn this great lesson. I am your friend and Nell's friend and I'll stand by you till hell freezes over." And turning to the crowd he fairly shouted: "I don't give a damn what the jury does in this case. Let them do as they damn please, but I am sayin' to you all now, that this damn foolishness in this county is over. John is the only man among us who has had any sense. We have done him great wrongs and made it mighty hard for him and caused Nell to go away maybe to her death, just because we were narrow and revengeful. Now I am going to make it my duty to repay him in such small measure as I can. Are you all with me?"

"We are!" rolled back from the audience. John was congratulated by all the lawyers present and by almost everyone else, even Ezra Whitaker. After a long time quiet was restored and the judge ordered the trial to proceed. The old attorney for the defense to whom we have previously referred, rose to speak. He was to have been the chief spokesman for his side, but now what chance had he to accomplish anything? Amid such a scene as this he was powerless. What he had hoped to do was now impossible. He no longer could play upon the sympathy of the jury. No longer could he use his cunning. The jury to a man was with John no matter what they thought about the case and

its evidence. His was a hard task. He argued the evidence and the rights and occasionally charged the taking and stealing of property by a soulless corporation, but he got no response from the eyes of his jury. After a while, he wore himself out and by a preconcerted agreement with his associates he closed by stating that the trial had been long and the jury were tired and that he had concluded that all the facts had been presented and that he considered the jury so intelligent and familiar with all the facts and circumstances that he would leave the case in their hands with the full confidence that justice would be done.

And it was done. Within half an hour they had returned a verdict for the plaintiff. And so ended the case of the Great Bend Coal Company vs. Whitaker. It was never appealed, and it was a curious fact that all parties were satisfied. It was not the ending of the case that satisfied. It was the speech of John Adams. They talk about that speech yet. It accomplished its purpose. It was one of those things that is the beginning of a great good. It started on the way a great feeling that still pervades that county and has spread to others—the spirit of brotherly love which tells to all that it is wrong to set one man against another. John had won more of a victory than he had ever hoped to win.

With this victory he thought he felt closer to Nell in his search for her whereabouts. Always in his Angelus after that, he had put a new prayer for strength for himself and for the safety and health of Nell. For he still believed her to be alive and well.



### CHAPTER XIII

WHEN a community takes hold of a change, it makes it a hobby. Great Bend and the whole of Woodruff County had made a hobby of the great good that John Adams had accomplished by his speech. He had sown the seed and an abundance of harvest was being realized. Everybody talked of the help and aid that could be given to others and all tried to outdo in practicing what they preached. The pendulum always swings to the extreme. If it has been to a high point in one direction, it swings to just as high a point in the opposite direction. This rule holds good in all reforms and social movements. To say that this community gave free expression of its infection of brotherly love, did not express the situation. Of course, it was carried to extremes; but out of all was coming a good that was very beneficial. Community interests amounted to more than they ever did before. The people united to secure certain advantages and they accomplished results. It was a great pleasure to John to see these things grow and to see this good spirit extend itself even though he knew that much of it was only temporary. He knew that enough of it that was good would stay and that he was amply repaid for all that he had done. If nothing else had come of his efforts than the allaying of the enmity between his family and the Hendersons, that would have been sufficient. He was satisfied.

He and Dave remained the same close, good friends. Together they continued to live and work and plan. Plans were a large part of their existence these days. John wanted to search for Nell but he knew not where to begin. They speculated but arrived at no conclusion.

John kept his faith. He firmly believed that he would be rewarded with success at some time. The general attitude of his community had something to do with his growing a little softer towards mankind and having a stronger desire to do something that would be more worth while.

He thought much about his business and what it meant. To be sure he had built well and was getting along nicely. He was satisfied with a future. He could make money in his profession and he loved the work. But was it the best? Did he get more for his efforts than in any other business? If not, was there another business in which he could engage that would bring him more of pleasure and satisfaction? As he worked from month to month, he thought of these things. He talked with Dave who urged him to remain as he was, satisfied. But one day he startled Dave by his conversation. It was after office hours and together they sat at home in the twilight. The glow of the setting sun against a bank of clouds in the west gave a tendency to increased imagination and to exhilaration. This was the time for the imagination to dream dreams. It has ever been for the dreamer to set in motion the things worth while. It is good to dream. It is splendid to watch the great structures of a day-dream rise to the skies. It may seem an extravagance and a waste of material and time, but it is from these structures that we salvage enough material to build the progress of the world.

"Do you know, Dave, I believe that I have decided what is the greatest and best business in the world? I mean from the point of benefit to mankind."

"There can be only one that stands out above the others when that is the question—the ministry."

"No. You are wrong. The ministry is great. It is fine. But it is so limited. It is so curtailed by lack of funds and by personal opinions and desires. It is so hedged about by the individual interests of the congregation. It seems to me that a business that would reach

as large a number of people and where results could be obtained, which would be far-reaching, would be a bigger business."

"Grant that. But what is it?"

"The life insurance business. I have thought a lot about that. When a boy comes into the world and grows up to be a man, he has obligations. Of course, we agree that the most important obligation is toward himself in saving his own soul. Next to that what are his obligations? He should provide for his own old age. You remember reading some place the other day that: 'Everybody is interested in childhood, few are interested in middle age, but nobody is interested in old age.' Isn't that about the truth? I was out here to the poor house sometime ago to see old Uncle Bob Anderson. He was good to me when I was a boy. He played with me many a time and did things for me that made me always remember him. He was a prosperous man then. He had that store down on the corner and made money. He had no bad habits and saved his money, until that scalawag of a Morgan sold him that worthless mining stock. Uncle Bob was the kind of man who took the words of his friends as the gospel truth, and so he believed Morgan. You remember how he lost his store and all that he had, and how it was just at that time that he was taken down with typhoid fever and before he could get back to his store after the many months of illness, his trade was gone.

"It is true that his competitor didn't treat him very nice and he took advantage of his absence, but the result to Bob was just the same. Broken in health, he could never get on his feet again. No one took any interest in him because he was getting old and beyond the productive age. For a time he was welcome with his friends of former years, but this welcome soon was worn out and he drifted. He tried going to Lexington and getting a job there, but he was too old. It hurt him to be told this but after a while he became hardened



to it, lived only for his existence. One day I had a long talk with him and got him to consent to go to the poor farm. We have as nice, homelike place out there as any county, and I believe it is run just as good as any. But my God! It makes my blood run cold to think of a successful man spending his last days in a place of humiliation like that. He cannot enjoy his existence because forever is he reminded of the days that are gone. The hopes that he had he now knows cannot be realized. For him there is no sunset of life. It is only the bare existence from day to day and then the night. And then the night! If Uncle Bob had only looked ahead and could have seen the last fifteen years of his life, he would have acted differently.

"I think if any man can visualize the last years of his life he will make provision so that those years will not be empty years, full of humility as are those of Uncle Bob. The life insurance man tries to make people see the last years of their lives and provide for them. And I claim that is a great benefit. It is making the man meet this obligation and in so doing he makes sure that he will not be a public charge on society and not a charge on his own relatives or friends. So much for that.

"Another obligation that the man has is the proper care and provision for those dependent upon him. When he marries, he takes on an obligation to provide and support his wife. That obligation extends beyond his life. While he is living and keeps his good health he can, by his work, support his wife. But in the scheme of life people die at all ages and under all conditions; and throughout it all there are great uncertainties. It is these uncertainties that cause us to look ahead in everything. If there were no uncertainties about the salvation of one's soul, we would be rid of lots of worry. If there were no questions about the support of widows and orphans, then the world would be rid of its big-

gest problem. But there are these uncertainties and therefore the necessity for life insurance.

"We see a young man start out in this life full of all the ambition of which Americans are made. He goes along for a time prospering. Children bless his home. He is building a business and getting some enjoyment out of life as he goes along. In his good, vigorous health he has not given a thought to the future in case he is taken away. He does not provide for any of the contingencies of life. Something happens. Disease or accident cuts him down. His wife and children are left to fight their own battles and to provide their own existence. He was a good daddy but he forgot. Now then, can you tell me any business in all the world that gives so much satisfaction as that of causing this man to see his obligation and make provision so that those dependent on him will not be forced to destitution or charity after his death? What does it mean? If proper provision has been made by him, it means that his wife can continue to live in the home and in the same station of life to which her husband has brought her and can continue to have her friends. You know friends—even the best of them—drift away when poverty comes in. She can continue to hold up her head and she still thinks that her husband was the best man in the world. He did not forget. But more than that, the children can have their education. They will not have to quit the grade school to support themselves and their mother, but can have an equal chance with the neighbors' boys and girls.

"When the parents brought them into the world, they were obligated to give them a chance for their existence, and that means that they should have an equal chance. And today, no one has an equal chance if he or she does not have an education. Maybe it need not be a university education, but it must be a high school education at least. To provide a chance and a sure chance for boys and girls, it seems to me, is doing about the great-

est thing that can be done in all the world. Many people spend their time and money saving people who are down. But wouldn't the old rule of an ounce of prevention accomplish more? If boys and girls are given a chance not many of them will go very far wrong. Just what you said the other day proves what I am trying to say. You said that 90% of the crime in the world is committed by uneducated persons. Doesn't that tell the story? You also said that there was a great percentage of boys and girls, 60%, I believe, who have to leave high school before they have had the second year. Now suppose that a man was in a business of providing for boys and girls so that they would have their chance and prevent a lot of crime and charity and make this old world a better place, can you imagine a better business, or one which would give you any more satisfaction?

"Suppose friend husband, who in his great ambition to succeed, has been too busy to think of the obligations he owes to his loved ones, instead of dying, becomes totally disabled, a charge on his wife and children, then think of the disaster. I call that a real disaster. The wife must then in some way get a living until the children can help. In addition to the living, there is the expense of the illness. There is a real helpless situation. It is one to try the patience and fairly wring the soul of any wife. It is bad enough when they are well provided with this world's goods, but where there is destitution it is heart-rending.

"It is the work of the life insurance man to make men see their duty and their obligation and to provide against these great contingencies of life, so that these disasters will not be so great. He is a creator of estates who provides for the future. If he makes a man see these obligations and provide against them, it seems to me that his work is of a kind with the minister, but that it is more far-reaching, in that it touches the practical everyday problems, the same as those of the future. It seems to me that it is Christianity financed, or Chris-



tianity plus the money to secure its success. Of course, we say that religion is a matter personal with each individual and its foundation is faith. So it is, but it is the temptations of life that we have to fight continually. The lack of the common comforts of life, to say nothing of the necessities, makes many temptations which reward the devil with many victims. I can tell you that I have given this much thought.

"I know that the law business is a great profession. But you and I both know that its benefits, except in a few rare instances, are confined to the persons interested. If disputes are settled—and most law business is disputed—then those benefited are just the persons interested. There is no far-reaching effect or benefit to mankind. I cannot create an estate for any of my clients. I cannot make secure their loved ones. The banker takes your money and invests it at a greater rate than he pays you, thereby making something for himself and giving something to you in addition to providing a safe place for the keeping of your savings. But his is a cold-blooded business problem. There is no philanthropy in it. There is no farther reaching effect than the sum of money you have saved will give. The physician treats individuals. Except that he keeps people healthy and cures bodily ills, his profession has no bearing on future generations or their happiness. It is my claim that the life insurance business is greater than any one of them; that it is the one real business in which a man can exert himself to his limit and get paid better for his ability than in any other business, and at the same time do more good than in any business I know. He is the only professional man in all the lot who thinks and provides for the future welfare of men, women and children. I am so convinced of it that I am going to change my profession. I shall move away from Great Bend. We will go north some place and build a real monument to ourselves in this, the greatest business of them all."

This came so suddenly and with such force that Dave did not know what to say. He knew that when John studied out a subject to a decision, that he was firm in it and would stand by his opinions.

"Well! well! well! This is a surprise to me. I have listened to you and have not interrupted, because I am poorly posted on the life insurance business. You seem to be well posted. I sure do agree with you that what you say seems reasonable to me. If you have the right information there is no question but that a business that makes people realize their duty, and then do it, is a good one. We, in the ministry, try to do that, but I tell you it is hard because the dealing out of the rewards is left to a department higher up. We are only the salesforce, as it were, and do not make our own settlements or deliveries. Of course, the greatest aim one can have is to make people better. If that be accomplished, then nothing better can be desired. You are good enough authority for me in everything else and I guess you are on this, too. But let's think it over a little more. You have a mighty fine business here to just get up and leave it. There would be lots of hard work building up a business in a strange land."

"Yes, I know all that. But I am young and I feel that I must do something. I must get away from here. I can get no start at finding Nell here and perhaps if I get out in the world away from here I shall make some progress in this direction. I have hoped and prayed for some clue on which we might start to search for her. If we just had a little one it would be better than none at all. The suspense is getting well on my nerves. I have worked hard here and have succeeded and prospered, thanks to your judgment and advice in many instances. But now I have a great desire to do something bigger and better than what I can do in the daily humdrum life of a lawyer. I do not need to lose touch with the people here, in fact, I should hate to think of doing so. I shall come often and keep closely posted

on all that goes on. If there comes a clue of Nell, we can have it at once and follow it. But the opportunities for good in another field are greater than here and I have made up my mind to go. I think I should like to contemplate the sunset of life for myself in which I can sit down and think of the good I have done; think of those I have benefited; of the children to whom I have given a chance; and of the old folks I have made happy in their old age. Oh, I fancy nothing could give us more real pleasure than that."



## CHAPTER XIV

THE result of John's decision was that he immediately began to close up his affairs preparatory to changing his business. He announced his intention of doing so and the word was received with great regret by all the people because by now all were his friends. They all urged him to stay. At first, he decided to go away, but longer thought and consideration caused him to change his mind in this regard, so he decided to remain in his native country. Of course Dave would continue with him. People generally did not know it, but Dave knew his promise to Nell, and it was the greatest pleasure of his life to keep that promise. It was the course of only a few months to close all business in his law office and be ready for the new profession. This was the course that John followed. He was careful to retain the good will and the friendly feeling of all and to assure them that he would always remain true to them, no matter what business he might be in. All wished him well in his new work. He retained the last afternoon of the day before taking up his new work, without appointment. He must have that half day to himself. It was a part of his plan.

On this day he asked Dave to go with him to Sunset Hill. Together they went to the hill where there were so many memories for both of them. It was here that he and Nell had spent many a happy hour together. It was here that he had heard Dave preach the gospel so many times. He remembered so well the great sermon almost two years before, that he had heard fall from the lips of his friend in which he spoke so much of strife and war and peace. It still rang in his ears as the best effort of his friend.

They reached the top of the grand old hill and sat a little while looking down on the town of Great Bend, which had always been his home and after tomorrow would still be home for him but he would be in a different profession. A little ways back from where they sat was the grove of trees under which the services were always held. Soon they strolled back there and there they lingered; John in complete reverie. He thought over the past; how he had planned and how his plans had been cut short on one day, never to be put together again. He wondered if ever they would be. He had faith that they would but that faith was getting to be a small one. He had never given up, nor would he do so now. But if Nell was alive he could not understand why she had not come back to him after he had healed the feud between their families. It might be that she did not know. She may have gone so far away that she was out of touch, or she might not care. The latter he could not believe. He knew that William Daniels had taken care of her property ever since she went away, but he knew that this charge came to him when her father died. He had no clue there and William claimed to have no information. Sometimes he wondered just a little if William was telling him the whole truth. At the end of seven years from the date she disappeared, there would be a test of this, but it could not be now.

Here on Sunset Hill on this beautiful afternoon, John watched the sun descend behind the hills in the west. Many times had he seen the same sight. It was always the one most beautiful to him, but today it seemed more beautiful than he had ever seen it before. The clouds, few as they were, had a brighter silver in their lining, while the trees which stood silhouetted against the western sky, all seemed to be holding out their hands to him. And as the golden rim of the sun faded behind the hills, he hoped that it had gone to light the day for Nell some place. The long, golden rays that shot up seemed

to greet him in such a pleasant way that he thought they told him that that was just what they were going to do and that they would give her his best regards. And then it was Angelus time.

There can come a comfort from some place to one who has faith. When Ingersoll said that "Life is a narrow vale between the barren peaks of two eternities" he gave a graphic description of it. But somewhere out there is the Divine One who directs the two eternities and he gives to us the great comfort—Hope. Hope, together with faith, has accomplished much. The ambition inspired by hope has many a time been kept alive by faith until success came to crown the effort. On this day there was faith with John, however small it may have been, and with him there was hope and that hope was large. For a long time did he keep his Angelus. Dave knew that he was keeping it. Ever since the day on the mountain a year after Nell had gone away, when he had been sure that he had had a wave of thought from her, he had looked to the east when he had kept his Angelus. He knew not why he did this but it had grown to be a custom with him. This custom he was following on this day on Sunset Hill. He derived much good from his reverie and from his Angelus. He felt the strength that comes, as we said, from some place, giving us strength and courage to go fighting on to victory. It has ever been so with man.

It was almost dark before the two wended their way slowly down the hill toward the town. When they left his mother's grave and came towards the brow of the hill, John said:

"Dear old Sunset Hill! How I love it! What a place to live, and oh, what a place to die! That last fifteen years of my life! No other place in the wide world would be so good and so nice as here. I wish I owned this dear old hill."

There is no tonic quite so good as a quiet hour of thought. In the busy whirl of life, one has not time



for quiet thought. Every moment must be given to problems of business. It is wonderful how clear a view we can get of things if we only stand aside in a quiet hour and let the world drift on while we think—just think. On this day, John had had his tonic and had been benefited by it. This was his last day as a lawyer in Great Bend, and it had been as he had planned it.

Early the next day he was to take up a new work; one which he had decided was broader and offered to him greater opportunities for doing good to men, women and children. It would not be an easy task to change his life's work, but cheerfully and diligently would he take up the task and with his indomitable will he would succeed. He had the vision and with a vision of what one wants to do, he can accomplish wonders. Already he had taken up and arranged for an agency in the mountain counties of his home state. This arrangement was with a company which he had investigated and decided was the one for him because the people at the head of it also shared his ideas of a broad, firm building for the future and for humanity, and not alone for the dollar. He was to visit their home office for several days for his instruction and for the completion of his contract. Dave knew all his plans and was to go with him, not as a partner under the contract, but as his constant companion and helper. Together they would learn their business, the better that they both might serve. To them this was a labor of love, a servant in the vineyard of the master, the same as Dave had always been in his work.

Together, the next day, they departed and for a month they received their instruction and studied the great business in which they were to be engaged. They determined that upon their return they would begin the building of estates for the mountain people. It was John's vision that he would build a great agency, founded upon such a broad foundation that when he was called to his reward he would leave legacies of

millions—yes millions—for others; that the people of the mountains would be benefited; that there might be fewer of such cases as Uncle Bob's; and that the entire community would be better off for his work. They did learn well, and in due time came back and set about their work. There is much sentiment in the makeup of the mountaineer and this fitted admirably to their work. They convinced people of their necessity for provision for their loved ones and for those dependent on them and for the provision for their own old age.

Let us make a long story short, and say that quickly did John build up an agency that was a success and a pride to him and to his company. And let us further say that he was happy, happier than he had ever been in any work because he could see the results of his labors.

At no time did he lose faith in ultimately finding Nell. There was not a day on which he failed to keep his Angelus. But the succeeding years were not without their trials for John. It is ever so with man, and especially a man of his makeup.

## CHAPTER XV

“**Y**OU are my banker and my friend as well. I want your advice in this matter. I can say to you plainly that I love John Adams and that I cannot make an impression on him. We were children together and I have always admired him. I have tried in every way that I know how to make a good impression and win his friendship and his love. So long as Nell Henderson was here I knew I had no chance. Since she is gone and is dead, as everyone believes, still I can make no headway. I thought when he changed to this insurance business that I would see more of him and have a chance. He seems so wrapped up in his work that I can hardly get a glimpse of him and am farther away than ever. Now I have decided that I want to learn all about this insurance business and in that way see if I cannot get closer to him. I want your advice on this plan and I want to know where I can learn all about the insurance business. If there is a school I can attend to get this knowledge, I want to do so. Give me your advice.”

“Well, I would say that you are persistent if nothing more. There are not many young ladies of wealth, as you are, who would want to go to this extreme. If the young man cannot be interested in some social way, the usual young lady looks for another. That would be my advice to you. John Adams is admired by all of us. When he came back from college and opened his law office, we all knew he would succeed, because he is of that type that does succeed at whatever they undertake. I believe he made a mistake in giving up his profession for the insurance business although I admit his field is broader for greater good. There is no question but



that he is making good in a very big way. Do you know that his account in this bank is one of the best we have and the most satisfactory? He will soon be a rich man. When he went into the business he went to the home office of his company and learned the business thoroughly. That is the best way to learn any business and leave it to John to do it the best and the thorough way. If you want to learn the business in that way, I can arrange it with this same company. You could not go from here. But I know a man connected with the company at Cincinnati and he will gladly secure that privilege for you if I request it. You would have to go as a resident of Cincinnati. If you insist, I will arrange it for you, but I would advise you not to do it."

"I will do it, because I want to know as much about this business as John does himself. Please make the arrangements with all haste."

This conversation took place in the office of a banker in Great Bend on a certain day. The two people were the banker and Miss Betty Allen. The reader does not know Betty Allen. She was a wealthy young lady of Great Bend. Her father was dead and she was the heiress to a large fortune. She was of John's age and had grown up in the same community with him; had attended the same schools and in fact, they had been good friends. But so far as John was concerned, that was all. She had always tried to win John's affection but without avail. She was of that type of girl who is the leader in all things in the community. If she cannot lead she is not in the affairs. There is usually one such in each community. She was the one in Great Bend. She had great energy and ability but her ambitions were also just as great. If she wanted to accomplish a thing, she left nothing undone to accomplish it. To add to her temperament and her character, she was blessed with good looks. This does not correctly express it. She was a beautiful girl. She was of that type so often seen

in the mountains; light brown hair and eyes, clear complexion and splendid bearing. Wherever she appeared she commanded attention. But she could not capture John Adams and it annoyed her.

She wanted to capture him for the same reason that a sportsman is willing to undergo great hardship to capture a tiger; the love of the chase and the accomplishment. She was used to having what she wanted and it annoyed her greatly that she was outdone in this. So she had evolved a plan and it was the one we have just heard her state to her banker friend. She was headstrong enough to put just such a plan into execution. In fact, she did so in the shortest time possible. It is not an easy task for a society girl, with no reason except her whim, to take up the task of learning a great business. But she did so just as quickly as arrangements were made. Be it said to her credit that she learned it well, too. Of course, she was expected to return to Cincinnati and put all her knowledge into practice in the agency from which she was sent, but a little thing like that did not bother her. She did not return there except to stop on her way and thank the friend of her banker for what he had done. He understood, and was glad to accommodate her. When she left him, she said:

"I have learned all about the insurance business, but to sum it all up, there is just one thing of value to me. That is the settlement with the beneficiary. You know the people of the mountains are not very well off. What is a fortune to them is only a small sum elsewhere. And you know they are a very trusting people. They take advice easily and swindlers get their money. It would be a blessing to every mountaineer if they had an estate which would come to them as does a pension to an old soldier. Then they could spend only the little at a time but there would be more coming. There ought never to be a settlement made in which a widow or children are paid a big sum of money, but the payment should

be made on the monthly income plan. That is the great thing I have learned and is about all I shall practice. You need not look for my name on the honor roll of producers of business."

With that she left him and returned to Great Bend. Her mission during her absence had been a secret to all except her banker friend. When she returned she told him of the success of her trip and that she had gained the knowledge that she wished and that she would put some of it into practice. She also told him that if any of the persons whom John had insured came to him asking about settlements on the policies which had become claims, for him to advise them to take the settlement in monthly income payments so that they would have the money immediately invested from the date of the death of the insured and so that they would be sure to get full value for all they had and little chance of loss of any of it coming in that way. She told him her reason and the theory of it all and he agreed with her and promised that he could and would cheerfully give that advice.

She went about her usual ways in the community. She participated in all events in the town and in the community and conducted herself in the way that she always had in the past except that she made it her business to know of all deaths in the county and was gradually extending this information to other places in which John was doing business. As soon as she learned of a death, she immediately inquired about the insurance and if any was carried she made a visit to the home and gave her advice. She had learned that a settlement could be made whereby a certain amount of cash sufficient to defray immediate expenses could be had and the balance in monthly installments over a period of years, with interest on the unpaid balance. This is what she advised and in her convincing way she won her point and had her way. In each instance her advice was given in a confidential way with a request



that nothing be said about it. Coming in this way, the person, especially if it was a woman, gladly accepted the advice as something of advantage coming from a disinterested person.

In the course of time John noticed that all his beneficiaries were taking the same settlement. It was a good form of settlement and one that he could gladly advise, but where they all got the idea was beyond him. He could not fathom it. Yet it was none of his affairs because it was an asset for him. The more monthly income checks he had going to needy people, the better he was off. When he heard some widow with tears in her eyes referring to her monthly check as "daddy's check from beyond the grave" it made him proud that he was in such a business.

Betty was returning from a visit to the country on a particular day when John overtook her and together they traveled towards home. The conversation changed from one subject to another until she asked about his business and how he was getting along. He grew eloquent in telling her of all its good qualities and how well he was progressing. He told her of the great good he was doing for the people in general. She asked questions and he answered them. She was evidencing a great interest. He told her of settlements he had made and of the great good that he had already seen from his work. She complimented him on his work and especially the settlements and praised his foresight in making his settlements in this way. She expressed her opinion on the benefit that a steady, certain income would be to the people. She was so profuse in her praise that he could not get in a word to tell her that the people themselves always selected this form of settlement. He finally did get to tell her. She was expecting this. It was just what she wanted.

"Oh, I guess shrewd John Adams had something to do with what they did. Everybody has so much confidence in you that if you gave your opinion as to what would

be best, anybody around here would take it as good advice. You will be a great man some day in this business and as it grows will be the most loved man in all the mountains. I love this business and am so glad you are engaged in it. It will do so much good for our people."

It was like her and yet he did not quite understand why she had such a great, warm interest in his business. Anyway he was glad. Human beings have ever a sense of pride over their accomplishments. It has ever been so since the unit of the home was established. Since man has raised himself above the tribe and established for himself a home with duties and obligations, he has ever had ambitions and been proud of his achievements. It was so with John. And woman has always been present to tell him of these same accomplishments and by her praise has gained her own ends. Betty Allen hoped that history would repeat itself in this instance.

Before they parted she had invited him to spend the evening with her the following Sunday, and he knew not why, but had accepted her invitation. No sooner had he done so than he regretted it. It seemed like sacrilege to Nell to do so. He had not sought the friendship or society of any lady since the fateful day of her disappearance. He felt that he should not do so now. And yet—well, he would see about it. Maybe he would go and maybe he would not. There could be no harm in talking with her about his work and visiting with her. The next day or so convinced him that he was very lonesome and that more than ever in his life did he yearn for Nell. Sunday came and he kept his appointment with Betty. He told Dave that he was going to do so, but that he would let it be the last time. Dave did not like Betty and never had. It was his opinion that she was a frivolous girl with no good intentions and not at all the girl for John.

John was not so sure of himself as he thought. Sunday night did not end his calls on Betty, but they began

to be seen together from time to time and Great Bend began to talk. He was as sure as ever that he had no love for her, but he argued with himself that it was not wrong to see her now and then. She was good company and he was so lonesome. It would never come to anything between them. He would see to it that there was no love. He was sure that there was none on his part and if he judged her correctly, there was none on her side. She was interested in his business and already—just from what he had told her—she seemed to understand it all about as well as he did. It was a pleasure to converse with her about his business. So day by day he argued it out with himself. It was like any other child playing with fire. He knew it would burn and yet he took the chance. Dave talked with him and cautioned him that she was not the girl for him. John assured him that he need have no fears. It was not so serious as all that.

“Old partner, you ought to know me better than to think that I would forget Nell after having kept my Angelus with her for such a long time.”

“Yes, I know you, but I also know human nature and I know that you are now dealing with a very ambitious, strong-minded young lady. The first thing you know you will care for her and then it will go rapidly to a conclusion. I would hate to see you married to that girl. She would be different as a wife than she is as the leader of the young society here.”

Many such conversations took place. And as the weeks rolled by they were more and more in each other's company. Many times she accompanied him to nearby homes in which there was bereavement occasioned by death. She was accomplishing her purpose. At least, that was her conclusion so far. And yet she had no assurance of success.



## CHAPTER XVI

CHRISTMAS in the mountains is a joyous time for all. It is a time for merriment. It is then that the spirit of friendship and true hospitality shows itself. Relatives gather at some place for a Christmas tree. Whole communities gather and celebrate. But always there is a gathering. In days that were gone, these gatherings used to be the scenes of rows and fights and death, but this had grown to be a thing of the past. Ever since John had grown to manhood he played Santa Claus to a lot of poor children. This had been one of his very great pleasures. Never a year had passed that he had not done this. He kept it up to this day. And Christmas was drawing near again.

Betty Allen knew of John's custom and she, too, thought of Christmas this year. The old Allen place, just out of town, was a beautiful stock farm and it had been kept up in the best of condition. Betty had always had this pride. She had a house in town but she always retained her room at the old, colonial home on the farm. This old home stood at the mouth of a creek whose hills came down to the house in the back. Around the back on the hills, her father had planted evergreen trees which had grown beautiful and made a picturesque setting for the house. It seemed to nestle at the foot of the hills in front of a bank of green. In front there was a long lane to the road and on each side of the lane a row of large elm trees spread their branches until they touched each other, making a great green arcade during the summer which was known far and wide for its beauty. It was equally beautiful in winter when the snow was on the ground. If they had snow at Christmas it was the most beautiful spot in the country. As

we said before, Betty had been thinking of Christmas, too. She had planned. And when Betty planned it was not on a small scale. When the plans were all complete she told John about them. She told him and then she asked his help in executing them. John was not the first man who had been drawn into a woman's plan, on account of his chivalry, and we are not so sure but that he did right in helping. At any rate he was the same good John who wanted to do all he could to make people enjoy themselves, and we will assume that he agreed solely for this reason.

When she told him all that she proposed to do she said:

"You have always played Santa Claus to the poor kids around here and this year you are a very busy man. I thought I could plan part of this good time for you. If you will help me, you can have a real Christmas tree for all the poor people around here, at the farm. We will have a big tree and make it a real treat for them. But I want them to know that you are doing it—not me—and I shall help you all I can. You and Dave come out and stay all night and we shall have a great time."

"Betty, I don't know how I am to repay you for the plans you make for me. I have been thinking of the ones I should take care of this coming holiday, but my plans were not so elaborate as yours. I shall be glad to help and we shall follow the plans you have made. I will speak to Dave tonight and we will arrange it."

And they did arrange it. Not that it suited Dave, but there was nothing much that he could do but enter into the plans. At John's home there was no one save his brother and the servants. His brother was away just at this time and he sent the servants to Betty's farm to help. For two days before Christmas he and Dave employed their time between town and the Allen farm, getting everything in readiness for the tree and Christmas Eve. For this reason they did not go home. Needy people had been invited to meet John Adams at the

Allen farm on Christmas Eve and this invitation included grown people as well as young persons. They came and such a time as they had. John had prepared, as always had been his hope that he might prepare and take care of his friends who were needy at this time. All were cared for. John was Santa Claus and everyone knew it. He might just as well have left off his costume, for all knew that it was he who was making them all happy. He saw to it that the families represented were all provided with a good dinner for the next day. He provided amusement, and long into the night did they stay and enjoy themselves. Those who were inclined to dancing could have their pleasure in the great room which had been cleared out for this purpose.

There was not a sad heart in the house unless it was Uncle Dave's. To be sure, he was glad to see the poor enjoying themselves at his friend's expense and preparation, and yet he could not see any good results for John himself. He was sure that behind it all there was a scheme and that scheme involved John.

It was a wonderful night. The ground was covered with snow. But in the hills snow does not long stay on the ground. It is a treat if they are favored with snow for the holidays. The moon was bright and the whole landscape looked for all the world like a great painting. Nature had outdone herself and made it all look artificial. And nature can sometimes do just that thing. It is the original that is of value. But when nature does her best she often makes the picture look artificial. All the invited persons had departed. On the great veranda, between two great white columns, stood Betty and John watching the last of them disappear through the arcade of the elms. It was like they were fairies going through a snowy archway. Together they stood. No one had spoken for some time. It was for Betty to break the silence.

"John, you ought to be a very happy man. See all the people you have made happy tonight. I think you



are the best man I ever knew. You seem to take pleasure only in the happiness of others. They used to say that that was Lincoln's great fault. But we are just beginning to realize that it was his one best characteristic. John, you are so good!"

She had taken hold of his arm, and coming closer to him as she talked, he felt her presence more than he had ever done before.

"Betty, you planned all this. You know you did. You have given me credit for it all. But you know as well as I do that it was your doings and you are entitled to more credit than I am. I am glad to see these good people have a good time. I have always tried to do a little at this time of year, but I have never dreamed of being able to do anything like this. You are the one who is good and deserves the credit."

As he said this he had turned to her and the pale light of the moon, augmented by the reflection from the snow, made his face and features stand out between her and the sky. She had never seen him in just such a light. His features were sad, as is usually the case on such an occasion. The very hallowness of Christmas makes us think of the day and what it means. And then the thoughts that come to us at this time are more the thoughts of good and humility than otherwise. To add to these thoughts such good acts as John had performed on this occasion made him sad, even though it was the ending of a happy day for him. We know not why this is so, but a tinge of sadness will creep in at the end of many a happy day.

It was not like Betty. But she did it just the same. It was very quickly and very gracefully done. She put both her arms around John's neck in a gentle, loving embrace, drew his face down to hers and kissed him. He knew not why, but he did not resist. He pressed her close to him. Her hot breath against his face intoxicated him. He knew that love had taken charge while he was off guard. For a few moments they stood there

and then both seeming to realize their situation, turned and went into the house. Uncle Dave, from the window of the living room, had seen it all.

Before the great wood fire they sat and talked far into the night—the three of them—Betty, Dave and John. There was a flush on John's face which Dave understood. He knew it to be the flush of guilt and penitence. Betty thought it the flush of love. John knew that it was a combination of both, for he realized that into his very being had crept a love for Betty. He had assured himself that this never should occur. Oh, why could he not find Nell? It was cruel of her to stay away from him. He knew not where to search for her or he would be off tomorrow. Why did she not write to him? She knew that a letter addressed to him would reach him, even though he might have gone away. And yet he hoped. But his hope was weak tonight. At one moment it had almost flown away.

Betty was a good girl, beautiful and grand. But she must not take the place of Nell. But then why should he forever tie himself down to a faint hope for Nell? He was a man rising in the world because of his great business. Because of the great good he was doing, he was becoming the most loved man in all the mountains. Why should he travel life's pathway alone? It was not intended that man should do so. He had been fair to Nell. He had waited for her. Every night he had kept his Angelus as he told her that he would. Tonight he felt as though he was making too much of a sacrifice. Wouldn't he be better off if he married Betty and had the comforts of a home, presided over by a wife, rather than his home of servants? All these things he asked himself before the fire in Betty's home that night. If he did not keep up his part of the conversation it was not altogether his fault. He was in a reverie. The dying embers gave him pictures which held his attention. Dave understood. He knew that in the breast of his good friend there were conflicting emotions. He

prayed that the remembrance of his promise to Nell would hold him true to the course. For it was hard for this staunch old friend to see any person take the place of Nell. He had promised her that to the end he would stand by John and that he would do. But John must remain true to Nell. Betty hoped, as do all lovers, that she was close to her goal. She could not feel ashamed of what she had done. It was honest love with her. On this evening, there by the fireside, she loved as she never had loved before. She yearned.

Who can say what the result would be if love be given for love at the proper time? Little things change the face of things. Many great events have been influenced by the change of a mind at a certain time. Sleep had cleared the mind of John and the next day he and Dave returned home. Before leaving he had expressed his great appreciation to Betty for all she had done, but there was no evidence of love. He was John again and Dave knew it. Dave was glad.



## CHAPTER XVII

**T**HROUGHOUT all the mountains there was a new subject of conversation—war. It was a year and a half since Germany had invaded Belgium. At first little attention had been given to the war. It was argued that European countries are fighting all the time anyway and this is just another one of their annual encounters. But when it had stretched itself into two and a half years, it was a different matter. It was a favorite subject of Dave and John. Many times had they recalled and talked of the sermon which Dave had preached on Sunset Hill years before, when his words had burnt into the very soul of all present. Was it a prediction? Maybe. Take it whatever way you may, it now looked very much like the thousand years were up and that Satan had been loosed to seduce the nations and set them against each other in war. Anyway, it was a peculiar coincidence that Uncle Dave should have so accurately described what was now taking place on foreign soil. On every hand it was the talk that America must intervene. If so, then Uncle Dave's vision of the white crosses might become a reality.

Together John and Dave had discussed the war news as it had come to them in the press. They had a good idea of the terrible disaster in Belgium. They had tried to vision the entire city of Ypres destroyed, with not even the grand old cathedral and the ancient hall of the clothmakers and the city hall spared. Nothing was sacred in this war. They had seen pictures of the surrounding country with not a tree standing, all mowed down by shot and shell. The nearby villages so completely destroyed that no trace of them showed in a picture of the landscape. They learned that each oppos-

ing army was a veritable battering ram which was daily hurled against the other with all the destructive force possible. And it was said that the Germans had mounted guns which were shelling cities thirty-five miles away. This was unheard of in any previous war. It was reported that the British had great armored tanks which would crawl into the mouth of the enemy's hell, carrying death and destruction as they went. And then came the news that the Germans had crucified three Canadians and left the crosses standing in their front trenches to be viewed by their comrades. Yes, it was a war different from all other wars. It certainly was Satan loosed from his thousand years' imprisonment. There certainly was some great force loose on the earth playing havoc. It was gathering the nations together for war. And they were warring with each other to such an extent that already some twenty were engaged. When would it all end? Would America really be called upon to go across the ocean and for the benefit of humanity help to end the conflict? These were the questions discussed by John and Dave at the beginning of 1916.

Questions of this kind could not be answered to a certainty. It was only by opinion that an answer could be given. They argued and expressed themselves as did millions of people at that time. These two men agreed that it was the duty of the United States to intervene. Their reasons were that they owed it to France to do so and that it would eventually become necessary for the protection of ourselves to do so. John, the younger man of the two, always asserted with firmness that left no doubt with his older companion, that if the call came he was going without delay. He felt that every patriotic young man owed this allegiance to his country. He had felt, and had so expressed himself, that he would like to go anyway and join the armies of Great Britain or France, but the reasoning of Dave had kept him from this. Dave knew that if the United States became in-

volved that John would go at once and he had made up his mind not to try to dissuade him.

The mountain people are a very loyal people and do not hesitate when the state or nation's honor is at stake. As this new year began, the feeling was getting tense. It was like the time just immediately before a blow is struck. Everyone is keyed up to the highest pitch. Every nerve is tense. A shout or a shot would start a riot. Such was the feeling in the mountains on New Year's, 1916.

Being as impulsive as these people are, they act and then count the cost afterwards. This was the spirit that impelled many communities to send every person of draft age into the army of the nation before the draft came. Whether it be that they are any more patriotic than other communities, let it be said that they acted promptly. John Adams had that strain of blood in his veins. As time went on he got more restless about the war. Dave knew that the time would come for a decision and he knew what that decision would be. He dreaded the time and yet he admired his friend for his attitude.

The winter dragged itself into spring. It is not a long time from the new year to spring in this country. During the days and weeks John put in good, honest work at his chosen profession. New Year's Eve had made a strong impression on him. It alarmed Dave that Betty was seemingly gaining a strong hold on John. He seemed to care more and more for her as the days went on. He saw much of her. When he was in town they were continually together and often she went with him into the country, she to visit friends, and he to attend to his business. She continued to know about his business, to his great surprise, because he had never yet learned that she had informed herself from the same source that he had. She continued to advise the income settlements. She hoped some day, when the first of the month brought income checks to enough of the homes of the country, that it would be a common expression: "Today the



postman will bring daddy's check from beyond the grave. Good old daddy. He did not forget." She thought that when that day came when the first of the month would be looked upon as income day as well as the first of the month, that she would then tell John what her plans had been.

He could not avoid seeing that she was a great help to him in his business and naturally this made a strong impression on him and attached her closer to him. If he ever suspected a plan in her actions, he never gave evidence of it. She shared his ideas of the war and the duty of every American, but at the same time she always argued that the time would not come when the United States would take a part by sending men. Just the same, she had a feeling that a day was not far distant when John would act, whether his country intervened or not. He had a restlessness that she had never approved in her own mind, although she had never mentioned it to him. She knew of the Angelus and always when they were together she knew that he must be let severely alone at sunset. She had never liked that because she knew that it was still a binding tie between him and Nell. No matter if Nell were truly dead, there was a feeling still existing that she did not like. Save for one time, she had never crossed him in this matter. This one experience was enough to warn her that it was sacred ground for him and that just so far she must come and no farther. She hoped that the time would come when all this would be changed. But she was good enough judge of human nature to know her limits with John. So she acted accordingly. This is the way with a designing woman.

## CHAPTER XVIII

**E**ASTER came and a beautiful day it was. It was warm and bright enough that the usual Easter services were held on Sunset Hill, as planned. For many a year these services had been held on this grand old Hill, the weather permitting. It was a great disappointment to all when the weather compelled them to use the church in the town. But this year, whoever it is that dispenses the weather, had worked in harmony with the plans and there was a great gathering on Sunset Hill. The old Hill itself had never been dressed in a gayer garb than on that day. The great old oaks were clothed in their newest shade of green, while here and there around the Hill, native flowers nodded their heads, as if they, too, were glad on this joyous Easter day. Further back on the Hill where the woods were denser, the white heads of the native dogwood served as Easter lilies. What a beautiful setting it all was! Nature in all her glory was joining in the joyous celebration of the day.

Uncle Dave had been requested to preach the sermon on this particular Easter. It was a pleasure for him to do this. Since he had been engaged with John in the life insurance business, he had a new and different view of life. He had learned more than ever before how man strives and works, not for himself alone, but largely for others. He had learned the truer meaning of "I am my brother's keeper." And on this beautiful Sunday morning, he seemed inspired as he stood there in the great outdoors, his white hair glistening in the sunlight and spoke to his friends and fellowmen. His sermon was not a stiff, theological discourse, but more as the old Romans or Grecians were wont to do, just talk

and discuss a subject. He first called their attention to the beauties of nature surrounding them and reminded his listeners that everything came from nature.

"In the very creation of the world, the Creator divided the earth into land and water. He filled the water with fish and reptiles, some good and some bad; he filled the land with animals and fowls, some good and some bad. When they had all been made, he then created man in His own image. Man was the only creature given the power of reasoning. He ruled over all. In his savage state he knew no duties. He had no obligations. If we think back over the situation, we will conclude that the sea part of this universe gives us water and that the land part gives us many other things; that both of them give us food. The fishes of the sea are used by man; the animals on the land are used by man as well for beasts of burden as for food. But none of these animals or fishes do anything whatever for the improvement of natural conditions as they find them. So far as we are able to determine, there is no animal that has intelligence enough to organize into communities, and so far as we know, they have no ability and incentive to improve things one particle. But man was made with a countenance that looks upward and man was the last of the creatures of the earth to be made. Whether it was for the reason that all the forms of countenance had been used in supplying the animals or not, we do not know, but it remains anyway that man is the only animal or being that looks upward. Man has intelligence, and since his creation he has improved his condition and he has improved in this proportion as he has been able in every particular locality to separate the light and the darkness.

"This universe is so made that even the climates of the different countries are sometimes a hazard to man. The tropical climates very often so take away the incentive and pride of a man that he loses his character. It is hard for him to retain the position at which he has



arrived. The countries of the far north have their hazard, and likewise the temperate zones in which we live. All of them present to man a difficulty and a hazard and he must continually be on his guard to progress. The savage tribe that used to roam over this land and through this forest, secured their living from the lake and from the forest. They added nothing to nature. It is true that their traditions were unique, but as a race they did not progress. They built no homes; they built no cities, hence their needs were only that of a living as they roamed from place to place.

“But the race with a purpose, that part of the human race that has gone ahead, that part of the human race that looks to a living God and to the protection of the soul of man, has progressed. He has built cities; he has built homes; he recognizes responsibilities. He also recognizes that nature has placed this land and this sea here for the use of man, and that man in his intelligence was made to dominate all else, and that the animals and the fishes and all else on the earth are for his use. He realizes that if he has luxuries they must come from nature; he realizes that if he has a living it must come from nature; and he must realize that it is the Creator who is furnishing all these things to man. He realizes that man is the only force in the world that can make it better. He knows that nature will build trees better than he can build; that nature builds vegetation better than he can build it; but he also knows that there is no other force that can build character, and that so far as the progress of the world is concerned, man and his actions, in other words, the character of man is the sole index of progress.

“Man may use his intellect and his ability, but he cannot equal nature in what she has to do. Man can paint a picture of this forest, of the trees and the lake. He may make it so it is beautiful to the eye, but nature can paint it better. But what man can do is to build a government, a state, a society to govern and operate the

world to its advantage. If he builds well, then there is a good country; if he tears it down, as has been done in Russia, then darkness overwhelms the land and there is anarchy. So we know that man is the only force that can make things better, and when he builds a home and cities, he realizes that there is a responsibility from him to his loved ones to try to retain them in that same position to which he has brought them. If he was a savage, roaming through this forest and getting all his living and depending upon it entirely so long as he was here, then he would not need to recognize a responsibility. Those of his tribe could take care of themselves because there is no family unit; he is only one of the tribe and therefore there is no responsibility, but just as soon as man arrives at the proper intelligence, he recognizes the necessity of a family unit, and just as soon as the family unit is established, then there is a responsibility on the head of that family. Out of this responsibility has grown more progress of the world than out of anything else.

“Easter time is a glad time for us. It is a day for joyous celebration for the Christ who arose among the lilies. It is a day to go back to nature and learn the true rules for man’s proper living. We learn much from nature; from the very nature that lies here at our feet today; from the nature that gave us all that we have; from the nature that makes us know that a seed will sprout into a tree, and that this tree will become a great, sturdy oak, strong in its trunk and offering protection to anything and anybody that comes beneath its spreading boughs. We have learned to expect these things from nature. We know from nature comes our ambition; that ambition that came to us from the generations gone before; that ambition that has taught us that we can take the sturdy oak we have seen grow and build for ourselves a house and make of it a home to shelter our loved ones; and we know we can put over the door of that house, built from nature’s own wood,

a vine; and we know that in the proper season the grapes will grow purple in the kiss of the autumn sun. We know that love comes from the ambition of a soul and we know if it does come in this way that a man will protect those he loves.

“So it is from nature we learn our lesson and it is very fitting we come back today to nature for a lesson; a lesson that means much to us; a lesson that tells us that whatever we are or aspire to be, must come from the rules that have been proven and demonstrated by nature.”

He held the close attention of all and closed beautifully:

“My friends, we are very fortunate here in this land of the free and the brave. On European soil on this day, the homes are sad. In some of the countries now engaged in the great war, there is scarcely a home across whose threshold has not stepped the grim reaper. They have given their husbands, their sons and their relatives that liberty and right may prevail. Men do not so much want liberty as they want equality. Equality is what counts in any body of people. This nation of ours told the world in its very first message that ‘all men are created free and equal’ and that one message is enough to distinguish it from all other nations of the earth. Other nations have their great men who have been their rulers, their kings, their emperors, their kaisers, but none of them can lay claim to a Washington or a Lincoln, That privilege is only for the United States. Our own Lincoln, who said that our government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth, is now and will ever be the foremost character of the world. Next to Jesus Christ of Nazareth, he is the greatest. And it was his striving for the equality of men that made him so. He gave himself for others, as Jesus gave himself for the salvation of the world. We, as a nation, will give for our brother nations across the sea. We shall do all we can. We can only hope



that the spirit of our own great Lincoln may come down from on high and touch the hearts of these people who are devouring each other, and that they may be touched with that feeling of equality and right which makes men regard the rights of others.

"Across the sea there is a great conflict that today casts a shadow over what would otherwise be for us a perfect Easter day. We are joyous in our celebration of this day, but every moment we are reminded of the death and destruction going on and of the probability of our own nation being involved. So, my friends, beautiful as this day is, and happy as we are, when the sun sets tonight on Sunset Hill, the lengthening shadows of the closing day will creep up here like the yearning of men's unfinished dreams, like statues and ideals, only partially completed. May God grant that the next Easter find us free from concern over the safety of our nation!"

John and Betty had gone to Sunset Hill together on this Easter day and they had heard Uncle Dave as they had heard him many times before, but the strain of his sermon on this day made a hush over his audience as it had once before, when he had spoken of Satan being loosed on the world. Betty dreaded the effect this sermon would have on John. For the last few days, the talk of war had been very great and she knew that the time for a decision was only hours ahead for John.

They spent the day together at Betty's home and in the afternoon took a walk on Sunset Hill. They had an enjoyable time. Betty was afraid for John to go away to war. Somehow she felt that it was giving him back to Nell if he did go. She knew not what caused this feeling when everyone believed Nell to be dead. It was just one of those fears that comes to us and stays so long that it becomes a part of ourselves. When sunset was approaching they were seated on the point of the hill directly overlooking the town. The lengthening shadows of the western hills were beginning to creep up, as Uncle Dave said they would, and John thought

that these shadows were indeed like his unfinished dreams, like his own ideals which had been shattered. It made him sad. On that day he had fought a great fight. He felt a duty to propose to Betty, if he continued to keep her company, and he felt that if he did propose he would be accepted. And yet, he felt another duty to Nell. He must not abandon her and their Angelus. On this day the opportune moment for proposal had presented itself many times and as often had he fought it off, he knew not why, except that it be out of fairness to Nell. And here he was again in the very atmosphere of proposal, and what should he do?

Betty sat very close to him as they gazed into the setting sun. A robin sat on the topmost branch of an elm close by, singing a song of love, while his mate was carrying sprigs of grass to build their home in this selfsame tree. "When you come to the end of a perfect day," hummed Betty, very softly. It had, indeed, been a perfect day. She had done everything possible to make him happy on this day. Farther up the hill crept the lengthening shadows. She was a beautiful girl, of good family and ought to make any man a good wife. Dave had always seemed a little adverse to Betty, but probably that was natural, considering his close friendship for Nell. The shadows had crept past them and were fast crawling toward the top of the hill. In a few moments more it would be sunset. Both of them knew this. Betty slipped her arm through John's and leaned a little closer. He must decide fast, so far as this moment was concerned. Would he choose the girl at his side as his life's companion, or would he anchor his hope to Nell, who was only a hope, a vision, a remembrance? It had been four long years since she had disappeared from his life. He was entitled to his life and to a home.

"John, dear, will you do something for me?"

"Why, certainly, if I can."

"Won't you give up the Angelus?"

"Why?"

"Because you have made yourself miserable long enough with it. It isn't worth it. It is a foolish idea anyway."

The shadows had at that moment enveloped the mountain. It was sunset. John sat for the veriest little moment looking at her, then slowly he disengaged his arm, rose, and turning, walked a little way toward the east with his head up and a light in his eyes which had not been there for days. He had given his answer. He had kept his Angelus.

When he came back to where Betty sat it was plain to be seen that she was as angry as she could be. John knew this was the time to settle their affair. He owed it to her as a gentleman and he owed it to himself as a man. He would meet the situation open and above board, as had always been his rule in all matters.

"Betty, I did not intend to be rude to you, nor did I intend to break a promise that I made years ago. You have made this day a very happy one for me and for many such days I am greatly indebted to you. I think a great deal of you. You are like a sister to me. You have a right to expect me to make my intentions known to you. That question has been uppermost in my mind today. Much as I like you, something tells me and has told me tonight, that I should remain true to my promise to Nell Henderson. That being the case, it is unfair for me to monopolize your time and chances for a union with someone else. I hope that we may remain true, good friends, always, but this will be our last time together under the old circumstances."

"I might have known that you would stick to her. Everybody said you would. Well, all right, you just hang on to your fool ideas, and let people continue to laugh at you. Take me home. I never want to see you again. You are the meanest man I ever knew anyway."

"Very well, Betty. I'll take you home, but not until I have told you something more. Tomorrow my arrangements will be completed to go to war. I feel, as



I have felt for a long time, that it is a duty of mine to go to France. I shall sail as soon as I can get passage. It will not be long till our own country is involved and I shall be on the ground doing all I can. It is fair to me as well as to you that you should know this at this time. No one else knows it."

"You need not be telling me. I have no interest in it. Tell it to Nell Henderson. I do not consider it much loyalty to our government to join the army of some other nation."

"I may have the opportunity of joining the army of my own nation. If that opportunity comes soon enough I certainly shall do so. But I shall do what I can to aid the cause, anyway."

"Well, I wish you luck. This great business of yours will not be as great a monument to you as you have talked, will it? It may be like old Dave's shadows of unfinished dreams."

"I have builded well. So far as I have gone it will be a good monument to me. Not so great as if I had spent a lifetime at it, but a credit, anyway. The millions in estates I have added to this community will be remembered to my credit for generations. Besides, I shall go on with it when I return."

"To think that I have been such a fool as to learn about this insurance business and help you."

"I appreciate it all, Betty. You certainly have helped. In doing so you have seen life and people from a different angle and are better off for doing so."

"I don't think I am. Anyway, I shall not be interested in it further. Will you take me home?"

"I shall. And I want you to know that I appreciate all you have done. I am sorry you do not see my situation as I see it. That cannot be helped. I shall always wish for you the best in life and I hope you will have happiness and prosperity."

"Don't bother yourself; I'll struggle through."

They went silently down the hill. So different was

it from the ascent. Betty was mad and getting madder. Who can blame her? John felt that he had done the right and proper thing for him to do under all the circumstances. It had always been his rule to do what he thought to be right no matter how difficult it was.

When they came to Betty's home he told her good-bye. She was still mad, cold and very disagreeable. He drove home, and like a simple child, told it all to Dave as he would have done could he have knelt at his mother's knee. Dave approved of it all except the decision about the war. He was very glad that he had given up Betty. That is just what he had always hoped would happen. He was confident that sometime Nell would return and all would be well. He believed, as John had at times believed, that she was alive and well and would come back. John believed so, too, now.

"Tonight, as I stood there looking to the east, my hopes ran high. And there seemed to strike me a wave of prayer from Nell. It was the same as I have many times had before. You cannot imagine the feeling, if you have never had it. It made me feel so good. It made me know that I had decided right. I am confident that Nell is alive and well and will come back at the right time."

"You are right, my son. She will. But now I want you to forget this war business, unless our own country gets into it."

"No, Uncle Dave, I would come as near doing anything you ask as if you were my father, but this decision is made and must be adhered to. Tomorrow I shall arrange for my brother, Howard, to keep this business going and I hope to leave here by the middle of the week. Nothing can change me in this."

And Dave knew that nothing could change him.

## CHAPTER XIX

NEXT day, in his rushing around to get things in shape to leave, John neglected to notice a small package that had come in the mail for him. Towards noon, as he sat at his desk, his hand fell upon it and he took it up casually and looked at it, laid it down for other work and later came upon it as he cleaned up his desk. It was postmarked Cincinnati, and was addressed to him on the typewriter. It was a small, square package. He unwrapped it and found that inside there was another package securely wrapped and tied. It seemed to be protected by stiff corrugated paper. He untied this and finally unwrapped a small canvas oil painting. It was about twelve by sixteen inches. As soon as he opened it he saw that it was a beautiful piece of work.

“Why, that looks like Sunset Hill,” he said aloud, and then scrutinized it more closely. Sure enough, it was. But what was the matter with it? To be sure it was the dear old hill, but something looked different. There was the hill standing out in all its beauty. Here were the trees under which he had sat so often and so long. Here the very rocks on which he had sat and dreamed the dreams of youth and later the dreams of manhood. Here the shadows had come upon him. Here he had kept his Angelus—his and Nell’s—so many times. Back further was the rise in the hill, that spot back of where the meetings were always held; back of the spot where Uncle Dave had so often exhorted his friends. There it all was, just as plain as he had ever seen it. And then, on that grand old point, where the sunset rays touched with so much grandeur, there was a stately church. It was different in its architecture than any he had ever



beheld. He had seen pictures of such churches in foreign lands. It was not so large, but it was beautiful. It faced the west and stood as if it had just grown up as the trees had grown. It stood as natural as any part of the landscape. It was built as so many of the European churches are built, in the form of a cross. The front was ornamented by two stately towers—towers that were not too high, but just the right height to make it look stately and grand, and yet fitting to its setting. The towers were ornamented by statues and figures, while a gilded cross adorned the top of each tower.

As he looked at the painting he could imagine the setting sun casting his last slanting rays on these crosses and how they would stand forth as pure gold. Over the splendid arched doorway there was much carved work and above that a beautiful statue of the Virgin Mary, standing in the act of blessing those who enter. It was beautiful. On the green lawn in front stood two figures, a man and a woman. They were facing the east, their heads slightly bowed. The thought flashed through John's mind: "They are keeping the Angelus." Probably in the towers was a bell or a chime of bells which tolled the Angelus for them. Yes, that was it. But who were they? He looked closer, and to his great surprise the features were those of himself and Nell. Small as the picture was, the figures were plainly the outlines and features of Nell and himself. The whole scene was at sunset. Now he did not have to imagine the sun on the crosses. It was there as was also the beauty of the grand old hill at sunset.

He looked for a name, for a date, for anything that would tell him whence it came or who the artist was. He gathered up the wrapper. The outside one was only a strong piece of white paper, while the inside was a brown colored paper commonly used for wrapping, and there was no writing any place. The address was typewritten and the postmark was Cincinnati, and there was no return. There was no doubting it was done by a

real artist and one who had seen and known Sunset Hill. Yes, and whoever it was, must have known Nell and him. He gazed at it and thought for a few minutes and then jumped as one startled from a dream.

"My God! Nell herself has painted this!" And then he searched over it all again to find even some little trace of identification. No initials, no name appeared any place. But he was sure of it now. It could not be otherwise. This was convincing enough. She was alive and had done this for him. But why had she not told him where she was? This had come from Cincinnati, and here he must go and hunt for her. He would do so on his way out. Just then Dave came in.

"Look here, Uncle Dave." And he showed him the painting.

Dave looked at it and could hardly believe his eyes. But that surely was Sunset Hill. And, oh, that grand church! It was just what he had dreamed about so often. He had wished that he might have a church on this old hill in which he could preside over a flock. But the people were too poor for even a modest church, to say nothing of such a grand one as this. And he, too, recognized the two figures as John and Nell. When he recognized Nell, he looked long and carefully without a word, and then looked at John. The tears were coming to his eyes. Maybe it was the strain of the last few hours of John's preparation for war, or perhaps it was just naturally his emotions. Whatever it was, he silently dropped to his knees, and, holding the painting up in front of him, as he might have held a cross, he breathed forth a silent prayer. When John saw him kneel, he, too, knelt by his side. It was a beautiful sight, to see this old man, his hair white as snow and this stalwart young man here on their knees, thanking God for their favors.

"Praise God, our prayers have been answered, John. Where did you get this? Where is Nell?"

"Dave, this came in the mail and I know not where

it came from, save this postmark. If Nell is in Cincinnati we will try to find her as we go out. Why didn't she tell me where she is? But she is alive and well and that ought to be enough good news for one day."

"Yes, it is certain that she did this work. No one else could have done it so well. We shall find her and she shall be with us soon and then we will be rid of all this war preparation."

"No, Dave, if you mean that I will not go, you are mistaken. My mind is made up and I shall go. I hope that I can find Nell before I go. I shall try to do so. But if I cannot, I shall go just the same."

The next two days were alternately hours of pleasure and misery for John. He was sure that the painting had been executed by Nell. But where and when? How long ago? Maybe something had happened to her and she had requested some one to send the painting to him. No, he could not believe that. She must be well. She must have sent it herself. She painted it for him. She was studying art some place and she had made that for him and in her own good time she would come to him. Perhaps he would find her in Cincinnati. He remembered the art institute in Cincinnati. It was on top of the hill overlooking the Ohio River. There he would go first and maybe he could find her. Wouldn't it be great if he could find her there at work? And then a cloud would cross his thoughts. What if he should learn that she was dead? No, she could not be. He would never let it be that way. God, in his great mercy, would never let that be. And yet, other people had died. And so on his mind ran in alternating currents and drove his sleep and peace away. But in the meantime, he had made all his plans for leaving. His brother was to care for his work and his agency. It was agreeable to his company that he have a leave of absence. Save for a few final details, he was ready to go.

It was his plan that Dave should remain with his brother and help him. He had made his will, leaving



one-half of his property to Nell during her lifetime, and at her death, to his brother, and the balance was to go to his brother with a provision for taking care of Uncle Dave. He had not talked with Dave about what he was to do during his absence. He intended to do so this particular day. That was one of the last things he had to do. Alone in his office, he began this task. And it was a task for him. He loved this old man, who had been a father to him for so many years. He had talked only a few minutes when Dave said:

"Boy, what are you talking about? I am going with you. Don't you know what I promised Nell? I'll be right close to you over there all the time."

"No, Dave, that will never do. You must remain here."

"No, sir, I must not; I am going. Read this telegram and I guess you will see that I am going."

From his hand John took a telegram from the Red Cross in New York telling him that they would accept his offered service and would arrange his passage. He should report in New York at once.

John looked at him. He knew that he could not object very strongly because Dave had tried to persuade him not to go and he would not listen. So he could not expect Dave to change his mind. And he knew very well that he would not.

Two days later, John and Dave left Great Bend on their way to Cincinnati. Here they stopped for several days. They visited all the institutions and schools of art and all of the art stores, but no place could they find a trace of Nell. No one knew her. John went to the postoffice and took the wrapper of the package, but, of course, the postmaster could tell him nothing about it. Finally, they gave up and departed for New York, and from there would sail to the seat of war.

## CHAPTER XX

“**T**HE other half of the world is different.” This is the thought that came to John Adams, the boy from the hills of old Kentucky, as he walked up the streets of Bordeaux. The boat had landed and he was on his way to a barracks. He had been given directions by an English officer at the dock. He let no thought run through his mind as to whether or not he should go through with his plan. That had been settled in the hills at home. There had been no discussion of the affair with Dave, who had been his traveling companion across the Atlantic.

The beauties of spring in this Bordeaux country were enough to divert anyone from a set purpose, did not national honor and pride enter—yes—and a great desire to do for humanity what he thought should be done by him as an individual. John had not seen much of these beauties, only such as could be seen from the shop and in the town. He was a careful observer and a great lover of nature, but he had seen none of the beauties here. He was too much absorbed in the incidents of war. Every place was evidence of the conflict. Even here in this town, far removed from the front, all was war and war work.

It did not take long for him, with the papers and documents in his possession, to make his enlistment and be assigned to a company. Neither did it take long for those in charge of that company to give him the necessary training. It was all accomplished in a little while. A few weeks of training sufficed, because he was an apt student, with a desire to accomplish something. Soon he had orders to be transferred closer to the front. He traveled by train part of the way. A poor train it was,

but that mattered not now. This was war and emergencies were all that could be expected. Before leaving, he had gone to say goodbye to his dear old friend. Maybe it would be forever. To his great surprise he found that Dave was leaving by the same train for the same destination. He took it all as a coincidence merely. Nor did Dave tell him that he had told his whole story and that of John to the Red Cross commander and had asked to be permitted to work in the locality where John was to be stationed. And so it was accomplished. It was not common that a man of his age and experience came to this work, much less an American, so his requests were given consideration when those of the ordinary man would have been ignored. The commander was shrewd enough to recognize in Dave a great factor in the work, no matter where he was located. They needed men every place. To grant his request would in no way impair his work.

So, together, these men, who had been pals so long, traveled on toward—what? Neither knew. But each were sure that it was his own choice and whatever fate held for them out there in the future there would be no complaining. They now were soldiers and must obey orders and await results as true soldiers. They had not even discussed the matter. It was a matter of course with both of them.

John could not help but notice the beauties of France as he crossed the country. The little farms of the peasants were well kept, clean and productive. Every place he saw only women, children and old men doing the work on these farms. He soon realized why. The man power was at the front. In one field he saw a woman plowing with oxen. Her daughter, a child of six or seven years, led the oxen. Her head was covered with a black veil. He knew why, and he wondered if the life insurance man in that locality had done his duty. He guessed not, from all the surroundings, and then he remembered that these were war times and he was in the heart of a



war country. He was to see hundreds of just such scenes before his journey ended. Soon he became used to seeing them, but never did they fail to touch his heart strings and cause a pang.

To a new traveler across France, the little farms looked for all the world like they had been carved out and fitted together. Here was the house and barn, perhaps one building constituted the two. One end housed the family, while the other housed the few animals. The small squares of grain looked strange to an American who was used to seeing large fields. And John wondered why the wheat was not all in one field, instead of small strips with something else between. When first they left Bordeaux the vineyards were beautiful, with long, high vines, trained so that they were beautiful. This changed as they got further inland. The vines in the north part were well pruned and short. He learned of the different varieties of grapes and wines and the difference in the soil and climate. He had a lesson in economy and thrift when he reached the mountains and saw the little terraces like stair steps up the hill. When he saw that these people raised their grapes and their grain on these steps, scarcely ten feet wide, which were held in place by little stone walls they had built, then he thought people at home surely ought to be satisfied with their lot. They had no such difficulties with which to contend.

After traveling all day on the train, which was slow enough, they got off at a little station from which they went by motor truck to their destination. They had traveled across France, and about two o'clock in the morning arrived at Souilley, and reported immediately at headquarters. He was assigned to a company for further training. All the time Dave was with him and the remainder of that night they spent together. Dave would get located in the morning. So far as activities were concerned, night was no different from day, here. They were only a few miles back of the front lines and

troops were continually coming out and new ones going in. Supplies and ammunition were continually going in, and in the distance could be heard the rumble of battle.

Next day John learned that he was in the Verdun Sector, where battles had been going on since the war began. It was here that the Crown Prince had come to win his spurs. He had read much of this sector and knew that he was now close to real action. But that made no difference to him. He had come to do what he could. On the following morning, he got his bearings and took up his work with a will.

When Dave presented himself at Red Cross headquarters he found an American in charge. He was somewhat taken back at his introduction. A friendly word had preceded him——

“Uncle Dave Daniels, from the good old U. S. A.?”

“Yes, son, but what makes you so handy with this uncle stuff?”

“Oh, I know all about you. We have a fine place for you, all cut out and work ready. Most men they send us have to be trained and taught, and we really cannot spare the time to train them. Now, here you are, with age enough to have sense and experience, just what we need, and from now on you are a general-all-around man in this sector. You will work with orders direct from this office, but for the time being we shall assign you to the new troops. They need help, advice, and just what you can give them.”

“I can’t talk French.”

“Oh, what’s the difference? You’ll soon learn enough. There are many nurses and others around who talk both English and French, so you won’t be lost. When a man suffers mental anguish his feelings respond to any language. When you want to build up a man, you can do that in any language. Wants are supplied without language. But I do hope you can soon learn enough French to give these boys a good old Kentucky sermon.”

“All right, sonny, I’ll do my best, but I am afraid

some kind friend in America has given me too good an introduction. I'll try to live up to it, but if I can't make good 100 per cent, remember, we are all human and have our limitations."

And so Dave went to his work among the new troops—among the very troops with which John was assigned. They saw much of each other for a few days. Both had to get adjusted to military life and to the routine of camp life. Soon they had a glimpse of what was going on at the front, as the wounded men were brought back to the hospitals.

At that place a large hospital had been hastily erected. First, a chateau had been used, but it had long since become too small and buildings had been erected around it. Here the wounded were brought from the temporary-aid hospitals at the front. As the wounded convalesced, they were sent forth to other hospitals to make room for the ever-increasing wrecks whom the ambulances unloaded. It required nerve and a steady head to see all this, day after day, and to see the troops come out covered with mud, weary from days in the trenches. But such was war in this great conflict and both of our Americans acquitted themselves creditably. Let us say of John, that he went through what all the other new troops experienced and quickly got his training. Let us say another thing, that he kept his Angelus religiously. This was now his religion. To what had at first been a mere promise and a custom, John had added prayers, until it was to him a fine service—his rosary—as he termed it. No matter what duty was at hand, a few moments must be given to his Angelus when the time came. It did him much good to keep his custom and the time that it took was not noticed. If a moment was all the time he had, that must suffice; if he had more time, he used it. So along with his training he never neglected this, his chosen and accustomed duty. Next to his heart was a package he always carried. In it was a picture of his mother, a picture of Nell and the paint-



ing he had received the day before he left. These he never relinquished for a moment. Yes, there were two other papers in the package—one, a letter to Nell. He had carefully prepared this. No one knew its contents save himself. The other was a letter directing that this package and all effects of his be sent to his brother in case of his death. John had thought it all out as many another poor soldier had done. What would be the consequence of it all? No one knew.

## CHAPTER XXI

**A**S BROAD as humanity was the work of Dave Daniels. He remembered the words of his friend that the suffering man speaks all languages. Nature made the countenances with a language all her own. This language is the same in all countries. When a countenance registers pain, all can understand. The patient may not be able to make himself understood in words as to the cause, but he can soon locate it. Wants and desires express themselves easily. A language must be learned, but nature's language comes to us all as an inheritance. So it was that Uncle Dave adapted himself very quickly and became a favorite. Even before he could talk any French, "Oncle Dave" could be heard every place. They had adopted his name. All were eager to teach him a few words. Soon, without an effort, he began to acquire a vocabulary.

The great hospital interested him most of all, despite the great suffering and the terrible sights. Here he saw all the atrocities of the war. Here he met young Americans who had come over to be of service—ambulance drivers, nurses, doctors—all doing their bit. It was here that he saw the great work of his organization—the Red Cross. No matter what nationality, each had his care. Even though only a few hours before a German soldier had been doing all he could to aid his side in winning and in killing the foe, as a patient in the hospital he was given every care and attention.

There was a central building, large but crudely built, and with poor facilities, but ample. This was just back of the old chateau which was first used. It was now the headquarters. In this large central building were row upon row of white beds, in each a suffering human

being, many of them with only a few hours to live. As Dave went from bed to bed, invariably he saw a picture, sometimes a beautiful woman, sometimes only a poor print of a shabby looking lady, but always it was Mother. No matter what the person had been—here and now, as he faced eternity and drew up close to the shadowy line, his thoughts ran back to his mother's knee. He remembered the days of his youth. His feet rapidly trod back over the path to his one shrine—mother's knee. If the injury had taken away his reason, he called for mother. If he felt the hand of death, it was mother to guide him through the dark valley. The great wonder of it all was that the nurses, most of whom were young, could live through these scenes. In this uniform of the Red Cross they were indeed here the "mother of all humanity."

From the end of this central building had been built, in either direction, large wings and they too were filled with beds, all full of suffering. It seemed that the continual stream of ambulances bringing broken and battered humanity would never cease. Day and night they came. From the wounded and the convalescent, he heard stories of the great battle that was raging on the hills back of Verdun.

Some days he spent in the billets of those resting up to go back. John was with him much of the time when he was free to mingle. Both knew a day would come when John would go in with a company of these men. But neither spoke of it. Back home they had heard a speaker who had been in one of the early battles at Verdun. He was so wounded that he was unfit to return but was telling his story and an atrocious story it was. So in a way each knew what awaited at the front.

One bright, sunshiny day, they had spent the latter part of the afternoon around the billets among the poilus. A small crowd of them were very young men—they were rested and were ready for a call to the



trenches again. There was an entire absence of gloom. All were enjoying themselves, singing, playing, and at various amusements. All the songs they had heard on the way over and at home, they heard again here—some in French—some in English. This was camp life, and it was running through John's mind how humans could be so near to death with such free and easy minds. Were they easy, or was it all a sham? Were they singing and whistling to keep up this courage? He concluded not. In his own case he realized he was not frightened. He was undergoing hardships with the rest but with no particular thought of the future. Perhaps later he would think.

“When you come back,  
And you will come back”—

That was surely a cheerful song here within sound of the cannons. An American was leading the singing in English, doing a good job of it, too. He was putting all the fire and enthusiasm in it. A regular American mass meeting it seemed to him.

When he had finished the song, they went up to him and talked a while. He was from the U. S. A. Had been raised in New Orleans; wanted to get into the thick of battle and had now been over six months. He had been in eight times without a scratch. He had “give 'em hell” every time and was ready to do it some more. The French were the finest pals in the world. “Eh, Frenchy?” as he slapped a young poilu on the back. “Oui! Oui!” “Oh, it's a great life if you don't weaken, as the Captain says. Tomorrow we go back to Douaumont to fight ‘Rat Face’ and his bunch of Boches.”

Uncle Dave saw this young man breathe his last in the hospital less than a week after this conversation. He was brought in with no chance to get well and he was present when he gave a package and a picture to

the nurse with instructions to send them to his mother at a certain address in New Orleans.

After some weeks John was sent out with supply wagons for the front. They were gone three days. When he returned he had seen just what the front was like. He had been close enough to hear one of the daily attacks of the Germans. Daily they had shelled the enemy whether an attack was to be made or not. He had seen great shells explode close to them and had heard the whine of others as they passed over their heads. He was surprised that his nerves were unshaken. All it had done was to steel him for work. It had put into his heart more of the hate than he had before. He wanted to kill Germans and aid the cause.

"Uncle Dave, it is great. I guess I will go up soon and have a chance at them. I don't want to fool around here all the time."

He looked at his watch and turned toward the east in silence. Dave knew that it was time for his Angelus. He joined him and there they stood for a few moments in silent prayer.

## CHAPTER XXII

**I**T WAS more than two months since they had left American soil. Both John and Dave had learned much. Sometimes it was easy to trace a person who had entered the army or the Red Cross, but usually it was very difficult. As soon as they had been assigned and knew where they were to be located, Dave had cabled his brother William at home. He had promised to do this. He did not know why, but William had asked him to do so. Dave was content to write to his brother, but had telegraphed according to promise. He saw little of John now because he was on duty most of the time. They met only as John returned from his trips with the wagons.

On a particular morning the rain was pouring down. It was a gloomy day both within and without because the previous night had brought more than the usual number of new patients to the hospital. As Dave stood for a moment at the entrance of the central building, looking over the sea of white beds, he thought, "He surely is loosed for a thousand years. I wonder if this carnage will ever stop." A messenger touched him on the arm—

"Monsieur David. Lady in chateau wants to speak to you."

"Who is it, son?"

"Red Cross nurse. Mademoiselle she say, 'Do you know Monsieur David?' and I say, 'Certainlee, everybody know Monsieur David. He Godfather to all.' Maybe she Americaine."

He accompanied the lad to the chateau. No one was in sight. The boy was chagrined. He looked and inquired but found no one. He then went to the nurses'



office vowing that he would find her. When he was out of sight a nurse came in from the yard and rushed up to him.

"Uncle Dave! Uncle Dave!" She threw her arms around him and before he could think he was being covered with kisses. "Oh, Uncle Dave, don't you know me?"

"Well, not as I can swear to yet. If you'll give me a breath of air and let me see you, I might. One would think you just came in on your aeroplane." She stepped back and as he looked at her face he cried:

"Nell! Nell!"

He embraced her again. It was his turn now and he did a good job of it. Just then the lad returned.

"Monsieur David, you have her. Oui! Oui! I say so"—and ran away. If they had looked closely they would have seen that she had been standing just outside the window looking in at Dave. She wanted to be sure that it was he and that he was alone.

"Well! Well! Nell, this is a surprise. Where on earth did you come from? How long have you been here? Why didn't you let us know where you were? Are you well?"

"Now, Uncle Dave, how do you expect me to answer all those questions at once? I can do better one at a time. Besides I shall not be able to tell you all now. I shall be on duty for an hour yet and then I can talk to you a while. But I learned some of the men were going to the front today and I feared you were one of them and wanted to see you and make sure of it. Are you going?"

"No, not today, but I do expect to go in a few days."

"Well, let me finish my work and see you then and I'll tell you all about it. But you must promise me not a word to John."

"Oh, Nell, I can't do that. He will be so glad."

"Yes, but you must promise. If you don't, I won't

see you again. I have good reason and will tell you. Will you promise?"

"Yes, if I must."

"There, I knew you would. Good old Uncle Dave. I'll meet you here at 10:15."

She ran away to her work while Dave walked out into the air. He was dazed. He had become used to seeing suffering, but this was a new surprise to him. As it dawned on him more and more that Nell was actually here near to them, he grew flushed and excited. John would be beside himself. Yes, but today John was at the front or off some place with the trucks and it could not be long before he would go in with the troops, maybe never to come back. Why didn't she want him to tell John? She knew he was here or she wouldn't have said that. Well, he would find out all about her in a little while and would not be bound by any promise. It was not right. John had suffered enough.

It was an age until 10:15. Dave put in the time some way. Whatever he would do, time dragged as it always does under such a strain. He was there and waiting before time. She was a little late.

"I had a bad case. It took longer than the doctor thought and, of course, I couldn't leave until it was finished. Do you know Dr. Atherton? He is from Louisville, and is a wonderful surgeon. He is doing great work here. I assist him in the operating room. Isn't it terrible here? A poor lad had half his head blown off. Doctor patched him up and says he will live. He is unconscious now."

They walked out of the building and across to an old building which had been turned over to the Red Cross as a kind of headquarters. Here they could sit down and talk.

"Now, tell me all about yourself, Nell. Why are you here and where did you come from?"

"Well, Uncle Dave, I am here for the same reason

you are here. I have been here two weeks. I came directly from Rome."

"Rome? What have you been doing there?"

"Why, Uncle Dave! I live there."

"Ever since you left Great Bend?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't you let us know where you were?"

"Well, at first I knew it was not advisable to do so. Then later I decided it was best for all that I keep my whereabouts secret for a while yet."

"Where is your Aunt Fannie?"

"In Rome. Well and happy as can be under the circumstances."

"Now then, just tell me the whole story."

"Well, you know the condition of affairs at the time we left. I knew there was going to be a terrible time unless something happened. The hot blood of our people back home demands excitement and they never seem to forget a grievance. Kind hearted as they are, I can't for the life of me understand it. I decided that for me to get away would cause enough of a break to bring about a settlement of our family feud. What hurt me most was leaving John as I did. But I could not do otherwise. Had I told him, he never would have agreed to it, and then if he had known, it would have spoiled all the chance of a settlement of the difficulties. If he had known anything about it old Bill would have concluded at once that he had planned it and then matters would have been worse instead of better. I talked it all over with Aunt Fannie. At first she said it would never do. She said we could just as well go to her brother's at Staunton, Virginia, and stay there a little while and accomplish the same results. But you know I always was in for the big thing. So I put my foot down on that. It was two or three days before I proposed the place. When I said Rome, Italy, you should have seen her. Good old Aunt Fannie! She's the dearest soul in the world. She sure has been a mother,



sister and whole family to me. Well, the more I argued and the more she thought about it, the nearer she got to a decision. Getting clear away appealed to her at last. She said about four months would do. She worried about not being able to talk Italian. But you know me. I was always ready to rush in where angels would not have dared to go. So finally we had it all settled. We would go to Rome. First I must arrange all my affairs so that we would have money and then we would go. She wanted to go for a trip to Lexington to visit the Howards, as we had often done, and then go from there. But I had my plans all well made. I had thought them out ahead of her. It must be a complete disappearance with no traces left behind.

"It took only a few days for me to arrange with your brother, William, to handle all my affairs. I gave him power of attorney so he could do it all. And when he had agreed to keep me fully advised promptly about all happenings, I was ready to go."

"Well, the big yap! I talked with him many times about you. We speculated on what had happened to you, but not a word out of him as to your whereabouts. And he knew all the time. I'll tell him a few things."

"No, you won't. He is my lawyer and had no right to tell."

"Yes, he is a lawyer, and as close mouthed as ever a clam could be."

"A good lawyer must be close mouthed. Don't you know that is one of the first things a lawyer must learn? If he fails to learn this, well, he can never have a good clientele."

"I suppose that is the reason he was so anxious for me to cable him our address. He wanted to know where John and I were located and if we changed, to cable him again."

"Yes, that was according to our plans. As soon as you cabled him he cabled me. I was ready and came here at once."

"Has he kept you posted all these years on all that has transpired?"

"Yes, he has, and has been faithful to the end, too."

"Well, of all things! How did he do it? Old Josh Bailey was postmaster and I never thought there was ever a postal card came to that office, he did not read."

"Oh, we had that arranged, too. All mail was sent to the River Trust Company at Cincinnati and remailed from there. They remailed my letters to him and his to me. All we had to do was to enclose these properly addressed in another envelope to them and they remailed them."

"That accounts for the picture you sent John?"

"Yes. I can tell you I was glad when I learned difficulties had been patched up between John and old Bill. I knew that ended it for the time being. That was as I had guessed it would come. Little did I think it would be so permanent. John must have made old Bill feel small and see the light."

"No. He made old Bill see the right and the common sense view of things. He taught him the Golden Rule instead of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' Bill is a different man now and John hasn't a better friend in the world."

"I'm glad of it. Dear John, he must have suffered. I have thought of him day and night almost. Well, as you know, we went down to visit the Hickman girls. Well, when we left there we just rode down the river a ways and crossed at the Gardner ford. It had rained the night before and the river was up but not enough to bother us. You know I always used to ride well and have forded the river many times when it was higher than it was that day. When we were across we turned our horses loose and made them swim back across the river and we took to the hills. That was the only part of our trip I didn't like because it was pretty hard on Aunt Fannie. I knew the way to Walnut Station but I knew we didn't dare get on the train there

because people knew both of us there. So we walked through the hills to Greenbush and got the other train. It took us two days. We slept in the woods one night. You know it requires only one change to get to Lexington from there. We did not stop at Lexington but went on to Cincinnati. Here we made some purchases and got ready for our trip. We also made our steamship reservations from there. You should have seen Aunt Fannie when we had to get our pictures for the passports. She imagined these pictures would be published in the papers. You can bet she was anxious to go through with it once she was started. I tell you, she is a great sport. It took a few days to get our passports. We had them sent to New York and that saved some time. I had to call at the River Trust Company and complete the arrangements William had made. In fact, he met me there and we completed it all.

"We had a fine voyage. It took only a short while to get located in Rome. At first, we stayed at the Grand Hotel, later at one of the American artists' pensions, and later we leased a villa of our own and have lived happily ever since. Aunt Fannie is a wonderful Madonna I can tell you, and she loves Rome now. It has not been easy living in Rome since the war came on, but one can put up with a lot of things in Rome just because it is Rome. This is especially true if you are interested in art."

"Who did you get to paint that picture of Sunset Hill, which you sent to John?"

"Do you suppose anyone could paint Sunset Hill if they had never seen it? I painted it myself."

"You!"

"Yes. You never expected me to be an artist, did you, Uncle Dave?"

"No. But I can easily understand how you would learn with your disposition and your wonderful persistence."

"As soon as I got to Rome I began the study of art.



I always had a longing. I don't know where I got it. There was no art in Kentucky except that which nature had painted. That was great and the people there do not appreciate it. Do you remember Eagle Rock where we used to sit and look away to the west, far past Great Bend? That is a wonderful view, enough to stir the soul of anyone. Do you remember that we sat there one day—you and I and John? That was a great day in my life. But for that day I think my whole life would have flowed in a different channel."

A sadness came over her face. A kind of a sacred sadness one sees in old paintings.

"It had always seemed to me if one was to amount to much in any line, he should get the best training in that line and so I thought if I was to study art I should go to Rome, the very seat of art. Here I could see the works of the famous masters. Here I could have the best subjects for study. Here I would be in the best atmosphere for my work. So at once I took up the work. I studied hard. My practice seemed poor, my drawings only average, but I was determined to do my best. I remembered what you had said once in talking to me: 'We all do not have the same ability, but remember your best is just as good as anybody else's best.' I knew if I did my best, it would be all I could do and for me it would be creditable. I might never be famous but I would account for my few talents. One day my instructor talked a long time to me about art. He told me where my ability lay. He said my landscapes were good. I thought he gave me more praise than I deserved. But his advice was to confine myself to that line of painting.

"We were there living in the villa on the Appian Way. From our garden on the east side there was a wonderful view of the Campagne. We could look away along the Appian Way, past the Catacombs, the tomb of Cecelia Metella to Frascati and the Sabine Hills. From here was the best view of the Papal Villa on top

of the hill. I had painted this scene during my idle moments and had taken it down to his studio for his criticism. He kept it for several days and then asked my permission to exhibit it in the art school. People raved over it and called it great work. Artists of note congratulated me. With all this praise I would have lost my head had I not had in my mind a subject which I wanted to be greater than this. I was so eager that this should be good that my eagerness almost unnerved me. I told no one—not even Aunt Fannie. But I worked—first at a small outline drawing and when I had that to my satisfaction, at a large painting. This must be my best because into it I was putting sentiment, and history, and tradition and love, to say nothing of my whole self.

“Have you never worked at a task, Uncle Dave, when you could feel the wings of the hovering angels as they helped you, guiding your hands and thoughts here and there, bringing you new thoughts and new plans from where you knew not, but keeping you supplied with new material all the while? I have often thought it was these angels who guided men to greatness: an Angelo, a Raphael, a Washington, a Lincoln! What part had they in their guidance? Perhaps the touch of their hands gave the inspiration. Maybe the ideas they brought were from a divine source, maybe the materials they brought built greater lives than the common run of material. Anyway these thoughts have occurred to me in my day-dreams there by the Appian Way. Uncle Dave, one can think there. It is a sacred place. It is only a step from our villa to the church ‘Quo Vadis.’ You know the story. Christ appeared to St. Peter as he was running away from Rome. When Peter saw the apparition, he said: ‘Quo Vadis Domine?’ To which Christ replied: ‘To Rome, to be crucified.’ On this spot they built a church and call it ‘Quo Vadis.’ That is the way of the Romans. All that is sacred in history is preserved. I can see from our house the entrance to

the Catacombs in which the Christians hid and worshipped. It seems to me we live at the very beginning of Christianity. It brings over you a strange feeling; a kind of a reverential feeling. I know it makes you better.

"Well, I kept on with my painting. After a while Aunt Fannie was curious and wanted to see what it was, but I made her promise not to look at it until it was finished. She says she kept her promise and I believe her. In a little more than eleven months it was finished. It had been a sacred work for me, a work I had enjoyed and loved. When it was finished I called Aunt Fannie one afternoon and with a great trembling, I raised the covering from the canvas and awaited her opinion.

"It came at once in an exclamation characteristic of Aunt Fannie: 'Great God! If it ain't old Sunset Hill, church and all. If Uncle Dave could see that. Why, Nell, it is wonderful. I never thought you had that much art in you.' Well, I just grabbed Aunt Fannie and hugged and kissed her to my heart's content. The picture had suited me, but I did not know but that my ideas were prejudiced by my great desire to accomplish. Next day I showed this painting to Sr. Ganovalo, my instructor. He was simply dazed. He looked at it and at me. He studied it without utterance until he was satisfied. Slowly he came to me, bowed low and said: 'I salute you as a great artist.' That was ample reward for me; coming from him I knew what this meant. He never flattered. He asked if he might arrange for its exhibition. I agreed, and to my very great surprise in two days he took me to see it exhibited in the great Palace Borghese. A great honor had been done me and I was happy.

"Later I finished my little outline drawing, and sent it to John. You have seen it, I suppose? Of course it is not so good as the original painting, but it gives an idea."

"Yes, I saw it. I studied it. I prayed over it. Join-



ing with John we called down a blessing on you for it, because it is the most beautiful and eloquent letter ever written and carried the dearest message."

"Why a letter, Uncle Dave?"

"Because it told us for sure that you were alive and well. That we did not know before."

"If John had kept his Angelus he should have known, because daily I sent to him, on the wings of my angels, thoughts of love and assurance. I never expected him to keep up the custom, but it has been a part of my very existence."

"Nell, if you have kept the Angelus as well as John Adams has, you have never missed a day."

"You don't mean it, Uncle Dave?"

"I certainly do. He has never told me so, but I know he has made a sacred rosary of that little custom of yours. No matter where he is when the moment arrives, he stops, turns to the east and spends a few moments in silence. The custom has grown so sacred that I too have joined with him many times. Here in the army I have seen him, day after day, stop and worship. That is what I call it. It is his religion. It is his hour of prayer. The poilus have noticed. They do not know, but they understand that it means something in his life, and they do not inquire. They all love him."

"I am so glad to hear all this, Uncle Dave. At first, it was a time for crying, later it was a moment of comfort. Do you know that a year from the date of our engagement, I spent the day alone in our garden all day. I just wanted to be alone. Most of the time I spent looking at the Sabine Hills, without seeing them. When it came Angelus time I dropped on my knees and with my face to the west I poured out a prayer and thoughts of love for John. And do you know I had the strangest feeling? It was just like John was there and had answered me. After that I felt so good, Aunt Fannie didn't know what to think."

"That is strange. I was with John that very day. At

sunset we were on Eagle Rock—right where you and he had sat a year ago that day. John kept his Angelus there. In a few minutes he jumped up and said: 'Dave! Dave! I have heard from her. She is living. She told me so.' He was greatly excited and I could hardly quiet him."

"Well, I certainly told him I was living and loving him on that day. I would have given anything to be back with him there. It was difficult to resist writing. But William had told me of his change of business and how he was working for a start. I didn't want to disturb him. I knew the time would come. I heard of Betty Allen, but that did not bother me. I knew John too well to let that disturb me. But I was frantic when William wrote me John was determined to go to war. Then I did get busy. I knew I could not act quickly enough to stop him and that my only hope was to find out where he would be located and go there as a Red Cross nurse. They need nurses so badly that it is easy to arrange this, so here I am, thanks to you for your cable to William.

"Now I have told you about all the story. This morning I made you promise not to tell John I am here. I'll tell you why. Telling him would not take him out of the army, but it might change him in some way to his detriment. I am keeping close tab on him. He will go to the front soon. We cannot help that. He may never return. But I am hoping and praying that he will. Later on, if we think advisable, we will tell him and I will see him, but not now. Don't you think I am right?"

"No, you are not, Nell. John would give his life to see you. He would be a different man. Now he is fully concentrated on helping to win a battle and he is doing with all his might every task which comes to his hand. He is fearless and brave. If he knew you were here he would have more care for himself."

"That's just it. How can a soldier with honor have

care for himself in this war? Tell me that. Might he not be changed to his very great disadvantage? I wish he wasn't in the horrid war. But he is and we can't get him out. Hadn't we better make the best of it?"

"You may be right, Nell. I feel that I must do as you decide. You have been the master of the situation for years and I guess you will continue to be. I'll do as you say."

"I assist the doctors in operations and the nurse who records all incoming patients shows me the records and I shall have first hand information all the time. I know John's number and so does the recording nurse. Should anything happen to him and he be brought here I shall know it. Of course, if he should be killed, we might not know that for a time. That is the only thing that worries me. But I have thought it all out and believe I am right."

"Very well, we shall do as you say. I shall try to keep closely in touch with John. My work gives me freedom, almost as I will it. I shall go to the front as soon as I learn John is going. Let us hope that those guardian angels you spoke of will hover over him all the time and keep him safe from all harm. Of course, you have seen John since you came here?"

"Yes, but I do not dare trust myself close to him."

"I want you to see him keep your Angelus tonight. If you can be here where you can see that tree down there by the canal, I shall try to have him there and you can see how well he observes it."

"All right. I will arrange to be here."

After more talk of home and old times, the two good friends parted. But they had come to a complete understanding of their plans for the future—all of which centered around John.



## CHAPTER XXIII

SOMEWHERE back in the many folds of the human brain, is the seat of memory and in that secret chamber is sure to be recorded the outstanding instances of our lives. If there has been a gruesome experience here we shall find every detail of it. Maybe we think these are more vivid than all others. But the pleasant ones are there too. All these constitute the little theater of old age. They furnish hours of entertainment when we approach the years of our allotment. What would old age be were it not for this little theater? If we could not call up the incidents and pleasures, yes, and the sadnesses as well, for they temper the scene; old age would indeed be dreary. There can be no more pleasing sight than a person growing gray pleasantly, when indeed the pleasant satisfied mind and disposition just seem to mellow the scene and merge it into paradise on earth.

To such a person the pictures that hang on memory's wall make a veritable art gallery. We must all have our little theater and our art gallery. Fortunate indeed is he whose scenes are beautiful and pleasant; whose pictures are of the pleasing type; there are always mother and the childhood scenes; the fireside of the old home, brothers, sisters and the incidents of their lives that touch ours; youth and our companions; love and its ecstasies; manhood, business, friends—ah, well, you know them all. Why lengthen the description?

To Nell, to her dying day, there was always one scene that stayed. Pleasant? Yes, it was extremely so. It was like old wine—it mellowed and improved with age. It gave her much pleasure in her later years. It was the picture of a splendid type of manhood at

his daily prayer. Just as the old painting of the Angelus has lived through the years—just so this picture lived with her.

Dave kept his promise. After leaving Nell he went about the camp. Later in the day John came in from Verdun. He had been there many times lately. He told Dave how the people of that town were living in the old Citadel and how the town was being shelled every day. On every trip he had some new experience to tell. So they spent some time in this way. They walked as they talked. John was sadder than usual that day. After a while when there was a break in the conversation, John said:

“Somehow I have felt homesick and lonesome today. We had to stop a long time on the hills south of Verdun. It was a kind of Sunset Hill, Uncle Dave. Of course, not so beautiful and grand as our old hill, but a hill just the same. As I sat there in the sun I took out Nell’s painting and had a good visit. It seems that I can almost talk to her through the painting. You know how one gets carried back in his thoughts. Well, I was in that mood today and had a beautiful excursion into the land of day-dreams. I have seemed close to Nell and to think I am, I suppose, thousands of miles away. Sometimes there seems to come to me something like the touch of her hand or the sound of her voice. You know we have agreed upon the question of spiritualism. Neither of us believe in it. But I tell you, Uncle Dave, I do believe that living human beings have a common touch of mind and I firmly believe that Nell and I are communicating with each other. If we ever live to see her we shall prove it. I admit that my thoughts go out to her with all my power, a kind of a personal radio, and I assume hers do like mine. If electricity can be sent through the air, why not our own personal magnetism? I firmly believe in it. Call it mental telepathy or what you will. It is something and I am both a sending and a receiving station.”

"Well, you may be right. It is worth while if it does you good anyway."

They had been walking up the canal and were coming close to the big tree Dave had designated to Nell. It was getting near to sunset. It had been a beautiful day, and the air and sky, with here and there a patch of white clouds, was much like in the Kentucky mountains. They stopped under a tree.

"Do you know, John, this is a beautiful country and this is a beautiful spot? I like it. It is too bad that it must be the scene of the carnage of war."

"Yes. I have often looked down the valley since I have been here and admired its beauty. It would indeed be beautiful to me tonight if I but knew where Nell is."

The sun had dropped down until it made a silhouette of a grove of trees in the west. They stood out like a piece of wonderful old golden lace, more beautifully wrought than the hand of man could make. It was a scene to admire even here so close to the sound of battle and the suffering in the hospital. This view was directly west from the windows of the hospital and was as beautiful from there as from where the two stood. In fact, they stood upon a little rise and from the hospital were the figures in this wonderful background nature was painting in all its gorgeous hues of gold and silver and green and brown. The highlights in the beautiful picture was a deep blue sky, with here and there a bank of clouds, each of which was now turned to pure silver, with edges of gold. One watched for a chariot and horses to come out from behind some of these on its ethereal way home. It made one think of home and that it was time to be there. Oh, if an artist could catch such a scene and hold it, he would make himself famous.

Lower dropped the sun until it hovered on the edge of the world. The shadows lengthened. It was sunset. Slowly John removed his hat and turned to the east. Uncle Dave did likewise. With their faces upturned they kept the Angelus. One of them had in his heart



a gladness in his knowledge that only a few rods away, the answer to every prayer was calling back many fold. The other was sad, and yet had a touch of gladness which comes from an unknown blessing, a sadness of heart but a fullness of a happy soul. They stood a little longer than usual, as John poured out his thoughts and his hopes and his love in his prayers. It was a picture more beautiful than the Angelus. Nell saw this picture and held it in her memory so long as she lived. In after life, when nature had silvered her hair, this was one scene and play in her little theater which never grew old. On her memory's wall this was the dearest picture of them all.

She thanked God for Uncle Dave and for John and prayed for their happiness.

## CHAPTER XXIV

A STRANGE feeling comes over a person when he first finds himself among strangers in a strange land and among people speaking a strange tongue. No matter what one's station or degree of intelligence, a strange fear creeps upon him when he first realizes that around him are human beings with whom he cannot converse because they do not know his language and he does not know theirs. It is no easy task for any of us to learn another language, especially after youth has passed. Many have done so voluntarily. John Adams learned French by necessity. He had that same creepy feeling of fear the first day he found himself the only American among a regiment of French soldiers. He understood no French. He found no one who understood English. He was in this land and it was up to him to learn their language. Immediately he set to the task to do so. It was not an easy task for several reasons. First, the French is a hard language for an American to learn, and second, he had to learn conversational French instead of the construction of words and sentences grammatically. He sought for some young man to teach him, but to his surprise all were past thirty-five and many forty-five and were provincials. He could not understand why there were so few young men. All were eager to aid him in every way possible and were very kind.

The absence of young men caused him to think. He searched the faces about him. They were calm, stern, serious, and in many instances, weary. But all had the determination of men approaching a great task which they had firmly resolved to accomplish. And on this particular day when he studied their faces, trying to

find an explanation, he gradually analyzed them as the outward expressions of an inward determination for revenge. He had watched them on the march—silent, solemn men. It occurred to him that he had heard no loud orders given. No man smiled. No man straggled in line. There was no visible sign that any authority was necessary, certainly none was exercised. All seemed to know their mission and their plans and were marching more to the sound of the guns in the distance than to the command of an officer. If they were weary, that must not count. The task was before them. Surely they knew their peril. Yet they were going willingly. His ideas of the French people were gradually changing. He had heard of them that they were weak and not good fighters. As he studied the sea of faces and forms, his own ideas of them were being moulded. He guessed that they could and would fight and that they would as willingly die for the cause.

For a long time he thought and analyzed the men and the situation. He was thinking it out in his own way. Like a flash out of a clear sky it all began to unravel itself. He remembered his trip by auto from Paris. It had not been a pleasant excursion through what was formerly La Belle France, because he stood in a truck jammed in with thirty-four other French soldiers. This is the way they had been transported to the front. Along the route he had seen the shattered villages. Once happy villages living their own life of contentment—they had been entirely destroyed. And such terrible destruction! Nothing was left save great piles of stones that had once formed homes. No wonder these men were serious when we think of their homes being destroyed and in many instances their families killed. At least, they were made homeless and destitute.

And then he remembered the many crosses he had seen along the way. Not a mile had he traversed after he entered the battle area in which he had not seen many crosses. They were along the roadway, in the fields,



everywhere. Many places large cemeteries—row upon row of crosses with the blue, white and red markings of the French soldier; and perhaps close by, row upon row of black crosses indicating German soldiers. All the graves were well kept. Sod was beginning to appear on all of them. The reverence for the dead is characteristic with the French, whether it be friend or foe. And then it all flashed in his mind that under those crosses lay the youth of France. That was why the faces were so sad. That accounted for the silence and the well directed march. It was as if they were the fathers of these boys marching under self-adopted orders to avenge the death of their sons—the youth of France. All the graves along the way meant that very thing. As he thought back over the scene, these graves seemed so numerous. They had been buried where they fell. Many a father knew only that his son was dead, but as yet he knew not where he lay. It was his purpose now to avenge his death—to do his part to drive the foe from his land. Forty-six years before, his forefathers had been engaged in the same task. They thought of their homes in destruction, of the families scattered and at sufferance, and of the sons who were dead. No wonder their faces were sad and their expressions held a trace of determination for revenge. It was the most natural thing for them. He knew now that they were not counting the cost. If they now showed a certain patience until “the day” but a great determination to “go through,” they were entitled to it all and more. And then he thought of the coming days. He knew that many of these men would never come back. He had seen the troops come out from the trenches, covered with clay, their clothes torn and soiled, many caring for their own wounds rather than stop fighting. Weary—yes, very weary and fatigued—but not defeated. They craved only a few hours’ rest and refreshment, when they would be ready to return to the carnage. He knew that the time would shortly come

when his own company would be called to "go in." He knew now why these men were so willingly making the sacrifice. He knew that in front of Verdun the forts which had stood for ages had been destroyed and were empty. But he also realized that forts do not make a defense. It was not the forts or the guns in action which were defending France, but these men before him. They were the defenders of France. And as he thought of their cause, he concluded that nothing on earth could stop them.

He was glad that he was a part of such an indomitable force and he resolved then and there to make their cause his cause. He thanked God that he had no son or relative resting in the fields under a cross, but he would fight with all his might to avenge the injury to French mothers and fathers. From now on he understood as he had never understood before; with this understanding there seemed to come to him strength and knowledge. If he did not understand their language he understood their cause. He was on common ground with them and felt at ease. From that moment his understanding was easy. If he did not have at his command the word to express his meaning, he quickly acquired it and soon he was able to get along remarkably well. He was such a splendid associate that he soon became a favorite among the men. They sought his company and he was really happy that he was there. Daily did he realize the great gravity of the situation and the task before them—these men of France of whom he had become a part.

At last the order came to move toward the front. The country around Verdun is a hilly country. Through the town flowed the Meuse. The valley was one of the beautiful valleys of France. But at this time it had been devastated. It had lost its loveliness and now was a vast area of shell holes. The great Citadel, which had been built by Vauban for Louis XIV as a fort for the town, was in use now. In its recesses lived the towns-

folk. Here their business was carried on and that was restricted to caring for the people. The great bakery was turning out bread enough to daily supply thirty thousand people. Here the people had lived since the beginning of the shelling of the city by the Germans. Here the wounded were brought and here some of the soldiers stayed. It was on the top of this old Citadel that the Kaiser had arranged to review his army and greet his victorious son the Crown Prince, alias "Rat Face." But many times John heard the expression, "*Guillaume il n'a pas venu et il ne viendrait jamais,*" meaning—"William has not come and he will not come." And they were right—he never did come.

Verdun was in ruins as John's company marched through it "on the way in." The old church was still standing, one of the mysteries of the siege. The town had been shelled every day for two years. The wonder is that anything was left. It was the duty of the fire department to put out the fires as best they could, and of the police force to keep the roads passable so the soldiers could get through.

As they marched through the streets, John realized what an awful sacrifice Verdun had made. Overhead they could hear the screaming of the shells as they came to their destruction. On up towards Fort Vaux they went to take the place of other men who had held the lines. When they came out on top of the hill back of Verdun, those hills that had once been so beautiful, overlooking the valley of the Meuse, he could see the general plan of the field. It was enough to freeze the blood of any Army. Stretched before him was the great plateau or ridge—Fort Vaux—and beyond it, Douaumont, both in ruins. Below them was Le Mort Homme. There the front trenches were stretched from Le Mort Homme to Vaux. In front of them on the opposite hills were the front lines of the Crown Prince's Army. Two armies facing each other—not very far apart—as they had been since the early part of the war.



The Crown Prince had planned to go to Verdun in four days, but in four years he did not traverse the distance. It was only a little distance, too. But here the French had said: "They shall not pass," and they kept their word—they did not pass.

The sight that met John's gaze was the vast area of miles and miles of hills on both sides literally covered with shell holes. Scarcely an inch had not been turned up by an exploding shell. Into the trenches and the dugouts marched John's company. It was now the early part of February. The weather was very disagreeable. They were to know all the hardships of this terrible sector. But by this time John was a hardened soldier—hardened both physically and mentally—because when he had thought it out that day he had made himself a Frenchman with all the qualities and spirit of the poilu.

His first night in the trenches he will always remember. It was clear and bright, but at regular intervals the rockets and stars were sent out over No Man's Land from both sides, after which would come a few rifle shots, telling of someone's death, someone who had risked his life to try to gain some advantage over the foe. Information had to be gained; mines had to be laid; wire had to be repaired. To do these things someone must chance and many must pay. As John stood there through his watch on this first night, he thought of it all and had no regrets that he had left his native land and joined these silent, solemn, determined men, and he would do his part to win.

Through the silent hours he wondered where Nell was at that time. Could she be looking up at the same stars and the same sky as he was? On that particular day at sunset he had kept his Angelus. It was more solemn than usual because when sunset came he was on the slopes of the hills overlooking Verdun. The company had halted for a few moments at a narrow pass to let the outcoming soldiers pass. Here he had faced the east and seemed to get a blessing from Nell from

somewhere out there. He seemed to feel her response. It did him good. The French soldiers had noticed his habit of stopping at this hour, but they asked no questions. They were too courteous to do so. But they knew something held him in a spell at this hour every day. And at the time they observed a complete silence in his honor and respect.

On this night, he wondered if he would ever cross that space which was now No Man's Land. He longed to do so. His was the feeling of all: to drive the Boche back into the north whence he came, and to do so so completely that he would never return. So he was ready to do any command of the officers to carry out their scheme, whatever it might be.

On the opposite hills, the Germans were just as alert as the French. The Crown Prince made a new effort every few days to break through but without success. It seemed to be his idea that if enough men were sent forward some one of the attacks would be successful. Never a day passed that the lines and the country back of the lines were not shelled. A great barrage was sent forward which demolished all that was left of the landscape. High explosive shells fell in great numbers. Then he would send forth the men, to be mowed down by the 75's and the machine guns. Each time they were met—but they did not pass.

Soldiers are men—but they become so trained and skilled as soldiers that they must forget much of the sentiment of life. Their mission is one of destruction—not construction; that is for the moment and with the individual. The winning of the cause may be constructive but the individual soldiers' acts are destructive. So, in the trenches, the life becomes one of hum-drum or the great excitement of battle. Seldom is this varied. But once for John it was. As we have said it was now February—winter, and a very disagreeable winter, but sometimes thawy and often very cold. The hills of Verdun are clay and acts as does clay everywhere.

When the trenches were thrown up the ground had been frozen. One night there came up warm winds and a thaw. It was a dark, cloudy night. Before morning the ground had thawed and the frozen earth had run down until the trenches were but shallow grooves, leaving the soldiers exposed to plain view. This, of course, was true of the German trenches as well. When daylight came there in front of each army was fully exposed the opposite army, each equally open to slaughter. The sun was coming up in the east. Soldiers were wildly busy in each front trench "digging in" deeper. No shot was fired. Back in the distance, some poilu with a grim humor, began to sing the "Marseillaise." Others joined in until it swelled into a great chorus. Then the Germans answered with "Die Wacht am Rhine." Still the men worked madly, each side expecting to be riddled with bullets any moment. On the French side the song was changed to "Le Pere du Victoire" and the Germans responded with "Die Lorelei." And still the helmeted men in the trenches worked on. Then along the French trenches there swelled on the morning air "Home Sweet Home." The Germans immediately caught the air and joined in. At this every man in the trenches on both sides, threw down his spade and boldly came out on top shouting and yelling. The words made no difference. Maybe they did not know them, but like pain and suffering, this great yearning for home expressed itself in the strains of this great old song. Both German and French guns were silent and silent they remained during the tumult of applause which went up from each side. "Hurrah, Frenchy"—"Hurrah, Fritzie," was yelled back and forth. This continued for some time until the soldiers longing for home and homefolks had fully expressed their feeling. The men went back to the task of deepening the trenches but neither side caused a casualty until the task was finished. Human sympathy, which is innate in us all, had crept to the surface and won.



## CHAPTER XXV

WHEN orders had come for John's company to "go in" it had seemed to him that there was great excitement at the camp at Souilly. By this time he had learned that that excitement was an everyday occurrence. This just happened to be his day—his and his friends. The ones he knew and the ones who were going, they were all excited. Since then he had learned many things. It seemed to him that he had been gone an age. He wondered if his hair was gray; if he had been gone as long as Rip Van Winkle? He had seen Dave only once.

One afternoon in the trenches on the slopes west of Vaux, there had crept up to him his good old friend. Oh, how glad he was to see him! He had taken a great risk coming in there at that time because the shells had been falling at the rate of about eight thousand per day on that particular area. It was awful. But in he had come, and kept on until he had found John. They had a short talk and he crawled back. He had told John he was in and out of Verdun, but most of the time was at Vaux and Fort Douaumont. He had been back to Souilly only three times in the last month.

The battle had raged almost day and night with increased fierceness ever since John had come to the front. Of course, he had been out for short rests and then back again. He had seen comrades fall at his side but no harm had come to him. He had been back on the ridge at Fort Vaux and had witnessed one of the daily bombardments of all the small front on which the battle had been concentrated for more than a month. He had seen the thousands of high explosive shells hurled into the hills until the whole area looked for all the

world like a great batch of yeast continually bubbling up and down as the shells exploded. It was as bubbly and as wavy as yeast could be. He had sat in his dug-out cut in the solid rock when it shook and moved like a hammock and when it was impossible to keep a candle lighted. It seemed impossible that a human being could be alive in all this area. He had seen many of them buried alive. He had dug out his own comrades after they had been completely buried by the explosion of a shell. Oh, what an experience! Sometimes he wondered if it was all a dream.

For some days now he had been on the slopes of Le Mort Homme—Dead Man's Hill. Ever since the attack started on that front, Mort Homme had been an important point, one of the most important. There was not an inch of this whole hill which had not many times been turned over and over by shell explosions. The very soil seemed sacred because it was a veritable cemetery. In digging the trenches they could not be careful in handling the bits of bones—whose they knew not—and many times they found and sent to the rear the remains of a brave son who had made the supreme sacrifice. Shell holes were the safest protection. But they might be all changed around in an hour's time. Perhaps a shelter of this kind would be completely filled up by an explosion which would leave another hole close by. Soldiers would dig themselves and their comrades out of one and go to another. Somehow they must rest a little and fight on. In the very beginning their cry had been, "On ne passe, comrades," and the honor of the comrades who began this cry must be upheld. The honor of France must be upheld. It was upheld and they never did pass.

To John Adams these great bombardments were great sights. They were to anyone. Never had there been such an exhibit of fireworks in all the world. In front of Fort Vaux and Douaumont and somewhat below, lay Le Mort Homme. The front line now ran just below the crest of this hill. In front of them was a deep ravine.

This ravine had been filled with German dead many times. Both sides of this ravine were steep. It was clay soil. On top of the hills to the west were the German trenches, all between, including the ravine, was No Man's Land. To John Adams, as he stole a glimpse over his parapet, he surely thought it was rightly named. Barb wire entanglements had been put up by both sides many times, but had been so completely riddled by shell fire that scarcely a trace remained. When the attack started on this front there were forests and graves and trees here and there; now, there was nothing but bare, brown ground, so terrible and complete had been the destruction.

Time after time the Germans had come forward, thousands of them. Sometimes they had gained ground. They had at one time gone as far as Vaux. That was the day the Kaiser had stood somewhere on top of the hill to the west and watched the battle. The soldiers knew his eyes were on them and they must win. But they had been gradually pushed back over their gains until they were now back across that ravine and the French held Le Mort Homme. John had been in the trenches here many days and nights. He did not so mind the days. It seemed then he could see up to the sky and that way at least seemed clear some of the time. But at night he never knew what to expect. Their parapet was notched every few feet, so he could get a view without exposing himself. Sometimes there were shell attacks all night, but most of the time the nights grew quiet—as quiet as a battle front can be. Then a rocket would go up or a star rocket explode, and immediately the crack of a rifle would tell of a death in No Man's Land. Many times, when these rockets were fired, he had seen blue forms on the opposite side of the ravine. He knew they were his comrades.

Now there had been greater activity to the west for two days. There had been continuous shelling of the entire front from Vaux on past Le Mort Homme. This



told them that an attack was to be made and from the severity of the shelling they guessed it was to be a hard one. This guess was right. At five o'clock in the afternoon, the Germans attacked. Wave after wave they came. It seemed they were so numerous that they were a continuous stream. As they came across the western plains, they were mowed down by the thousands by the 75's and the machine guns. They would get across the plains and a few rods back of the top of the ravine and it was here that they were met by the French shot and shell. The carnage was so great that when dark came there was a front of some 700 yards across the western plain from well down towards the ravine away to the north, in which there was a wall of dead German soldiers. In places it was so high that those attacking could no longer get over them. At this time the Germans were not particular what they used as breastworks. Their comrades would do as well as anything. So, when morning came, John looked across the ravine, surprisingly close, and saw a breastwork of dead men, and behind them the German Army. It was a gruesome sight. But gruesome sights were quite the general rule now.

During the day, at one particular point, the Germans had established some machine guns so well protected that they could not be destroyed, and they were doing some very effective work. They commanded the crest and the south slope of Le Mort Homme—all day long they did much damage and claimed many lives.

About eight o'clock that night, John was on his fire step, almost in front of this nest of machine guns. He had been very careful so far and there had been no casualties close to him. An officer came through and asked for volunteers to go across No Man's Land and destroy this nest of machine guns. It was almost certain death to those who went no matter what was accomplished. Something flashed through John's mind and he volunteered. They wanted five men and almost immediately got them. He gave no thought to the danger

of it all—nor to what might befall him. One little poilu, who had been particularly fond of him, came and took his hand, and in bidding him adieu kissed his hand. He had felt tears fall upon his hand as he bent over it. Others came and said goodbye, but he only went on with his preparation to go.

It was proposed that the party should creep across the ravine and up the opposite side and just under the top would dig a tunnel a certain depth, which would be about under the machine gun nest, plant a mine there which would be set off later. They must go now because the mine must be planted by daylight. All the tools and explosives must be carried with them. All this was ready and the plans were quickly explained to them. They were to go down the side of the ravine a little ways to the north of where John was stationed.

It was a dark night. But now and then a rocket made it light as day. They had little difficulty getting down to the bottom of the ravine. Here they must exercise great care because the lines to the north commanded a view of the bottom and slope. Many times did they drop and lay as dead until the light had died down. Once, when they were crawling up the west bank, several rifle balls spattered around them. They lay longer than usual that time before proceeding. Finally, they got to the point at which they were to tunnel. They began. The only question was whether there was rock under the top of the ground. They dug away and met no obstruction. They must work quickly and with no thuds on the ground or they would be heard, and then it would all be over for them. They knew about how far to dig and they had enough explosive, anyway, to tear up the side of the hill. They worked faithfully, and finally, about three o'clock, were in far enough. They carried in the explosive and placed it. They had everything ready. Their instruction was to set it off at five—when it would be just getting daylight. They were told it would be almost impossible to lay electric wires,

so the charge could be set off in the usual way. They had, therefore, been provided with time fuses in addition to the wires. They must use their judgment. Already had they decided the fuse must be used. They had a time fuse which would burn an hour and a half, so they must wait a little before lighting it. When the time came and they tried to light it, they found it damaged so it would not burn. They kept cutting it off until it was more than half gone before it would light. They were surely in a predicament now. It would go off now almost an hour ahead of time, and it was doubtful if they could get back to the trenches in time so they could be ready for it. The French artillery was to do its work then and hoped to make a good job of it, and soon after the machine guns and rifles must do the work. Perhaps there would be a charge. Some day it was hoped to drive the Boche back across the ridge—maybe it would be today.

John did not think long. He cut off the fuse and hurriedly told his companions that they were to return at once and he would stay and light it at the proper time and would then come himself. They protested and insisted on staying with him, but he would not have it. Finally they left, and he must now remain until after four o'clock. The time seemed very long to him. He was here so close to the enemy trenches that he could hear the hum of their voices as they talked. At last it was time. He lighted the fuse. It sputtered a little and went out. He lit it again with the same result. He cut away some more of it. Finally it burned. He stayed a little while to see that it burned. It seemed all right and he must go. With one last examination and look at it he breathed a hope that it would do its work, and departed down the side of the ravine. To the east, past his own trenches, he could see streaks of the gray morning. He wondered if he would ever mount to the trenches which he knew lay up there under the dawn. He would try and he would do his best.



He went cautiously down the side and up along the east side. He was getting along splendidly, when all at once there was a flare directly over him. A rocket! He jumped into a shell hole just in time. A regular fusilade hit all around him and continued for some minutes. All the time it was getting lighter. He attempted to climb out and go on, but immediately there were more shots and more bullets around him. He lay back not knowing what to do. And then another surprise. During the night the Boche had moved up some guns so they commanded the ravine lower down near the bed of the stream than they had heretofore. In their old position they commanded only the top of the hill and beyond. A gun was fired. He knew it was closer than they were yesterday. The shell whined up the ravine and struck the side a hundred yards beyond him, exploding with such an eruption that it seemed to him the whole ravine was filled in. He thought there would be little chance for him against these odds. But no more shots were fired. He waited. All seemed quiet, but it was getting light and he knew it must be nearly five. He carefully crawled out of the shell hole and up the side of the hill. But he had gone only a little ways when more shots drove him into another shell hole. It was certain death to go on if they had him spotted. He had better lay up for a while and perhaps for the day. He was in a deep hole that concealed him but, it was half full of water and very uncomfortable. But he must make the most of it. He would wait a while.

In the meanwhile the remainder of his party had succeeded in getting back to the trenches; had reported, and they had been watching for John. In the faint dawn they had seen him dodge from one shell hole to another until the shot was fired. Then they could not tell what had happened. They saw no more of him. John lay there for some time. He heard a great explosion to the west and looked out in time to see hundreds of human bodies hurled high in the air and see a great gap cut in the seven

hundred yard breastwork. From their action in the air, he knew living persons had gone up, too. He saw machine guns soar in the air and fall silent. Immediately there broke loose such a cannonade as he had never heard before. It was from the east and he saw the hills to the west begin to rise and fall as the yeast he had so often described. The French surely were doing their work well. He knew all the guns were at work—large and small, everything which could throw an explosive shell. As he looked, it just seemed that the whole west was an ocean with the waves rolling high. So interested was he in all this that he forgot his own position and peril. He saw the Boche running back from their trenches and breastworks. He saw them fall as the shells caught them. Then he heard a charge and the rifles began their work. They were on the run. He had helped in this. Oh, it would be a victory! Just then there was a terrific crash close by and down over him was poured something. Everything went dark.

Sometime later he began to think. Where was he? Oh, yes. He was in a shell hole. He was going to stay there until it was safer to go to his trench at the top of the hill. He was on Le Mort Homme. He wondered if he dared to go now. All seemed quiet. Maybe it was not daylight yet. Oh, yes, it was. He had just seen his mine blow up the trenches and seen the battle, and the Boche running away over the plain. What was the matter? He could see none of them now. Maybe they were all gone. He would look over the edge of the shell hole and see for himself. Just as he was going to do this, as he thought, he drew in his breath and he realized his mouth was full of something. What was it? He would take it out in a minute. Why was it so dark? He attempted to spit and realized that it was dirt in his mouth. He could not get it out. If he breathed it went farther down his throat. He must get out at once. Something must have happened. His hands wouldn't work. His legs wouldn't move. What

did it all mean? A little more consciousness returned. He must move and get out of here. He did move a little, just a little bit. It was just his lips and tongue. That dirt was bothering him again. He must get it out. Gradually, he drew a little nearer to life. He would move and take hold of this side of the shell hole and pull himself up so that he could spit. His hand did move a little, enough to make him conscious. He thought faster. Where was he? He could not see, but he could feel as if he was smothering. There was a great pressure on his chest. Would it ever let up? He could not stand it much longer. And then the consciousness enough to realize his predicament. He was buried alive as he had seen so many others. Was there no one to dig him out? Would he die there and no one know where he was? And then he remembered where he was. In the shell hole, and alone.

He must get out. At first he could move only slightly, but he kept moving his tongue until he had some of the dirt out and then he could breathe just a little. Then he tried to move. He seemed all doubled up and his legs and feet numb. Maybe he was sitting on them and they had gone to sleep. And then maybe they were shot off. Maybe he was dead. He wiggled a little and moved his body a few inches. He was a strong man. He must get out. He would raise up.

His mind ran on in this way and he kept moving a little at a time until finally he uncovered his face or part of it so he could breathe. This accomplished, he lay a long time just resting. He was hardly thinking. He had just stopped. He must get out now. He pulled himself with all his might and the result was an inch or two. He kept it up. Then he realized that his right arm would not work and there seemed a peculiar sensation in his right side. He got his left arm out and that helped very much. He could see now. He put his hand to his head and when he took it away it was covered with blood. Then he knew his head was hurt. He felt again. It



was hurt badly. That was the reason he could not think better. "Oh, well, maybe it is not so bad as I thought. When I rest a little I'll get out." He had pulled himself up until he lay on his side about half out of the dirt. He lay there in the shell hole, but it was a new one. He was a part of it now. "Oh, how thirsty! Where is that water that was here a while ago? I wish someone would bring water." He put out his hand to grasp a hand he saw extending from the bank. It yielded readily and he held in his hand the bones of a human hand, another human who had been buried alive. This was enough to take away all his life. After a while he heard voices in the far distance.

"Thank God, here he is at last. Lift him up gently, boys, and let's get him up the hill."

John opened his eyes to see bending over him Uncle Dave. Then darkness again.

## CHAPTER XXVI

**I**T was late in the afternoon when Dave found John in the shell hole on the side of Le Mort Homme.

It was morning—early morning—in fact, it was about six o'clock when he was buried alive by the terrific explosion of a German shell. It is no exaggeration to say he was buried alive. That is exactly what had happened to him. It is what had happened to thousands of other soldiers before him. Whole trenches full of them had died as they stood, literally covered with the upheaved earth. If, by another shell, they were not disturbed, there they would stand, the sentries of the dead.

As rapidly as possible they climbed the hill with their burden. Save for the fact that he could feel a faint heart beat, Dave could not tell that life was in John's body. His heart bled as he looked at the body of his friend, battered and broken. With the bloody condition of his head, he certainly looked more dead than alive, and it would be a miracle if he could survive. He could see that his left leg fell limp; in fact, the bone protruded from the flesh, and that his right arm was also lifeless. His right side seemed all crushed to pieces. But all this did not look so bad as his head. The right side seemed to have been dealt a heavy blow which had smashed the front part so that it felt soft to the touch. Dave was ready to say that his good friend was about to "go west," to use the vernacular of the trenches. But he must do all that could be done.

He had been in Fort Vaux the night when John had gone out over No Man's Land as a volunteer for this dangerous work. During the night he had heard of the expedition from the ones who had been going back and

forth. "It is ze brave Americaine—ze grand Americaine comrade." This commanded his attention at once. On inquiring, he learned the truth. Then he was sorry that he had not broken his faith with Nell and told him of her presence in the hospital. He chided himself now for not doing so. He had gone into the trenches; had been there when the four companions of John had safely returned. He had, with the others, anxiously waited for John's return. They had at last seen him start cautiously up the ravine, had heard the first shell explode. It came so unexpectedly that they could not tell how close it came to John. He was below them and to the right. The slope of the hill hid him from their view. At five o'clock he had seen the terrible explosion under the human breastworks. He had seen the break in the line and the machine gun nest completely destroyed. Then he had seen the enemy pounded by the French artillery until they retreated in disorder. He hoped that they had been completely driven back to the north. His entire concern was about John. Just as soon as he had been permitted he went down over the hill with other Red Cross men and some soldiers in search for him. It was almost night before they found him half buried in the great shell hole. He had been all day regaining consciousness from the terrible shock and pulling his broken body the few inches where they found him.

As they reached the top of Le Mort Homme, Dave looked down the valley and away to the west, saw the sun just setting behind the hills. It was time for the Angelus and John, who had kept it for years, knew not the time. He would not keep it. But Dave stopped for just a moment, removed his hat, faced the east and kept it for him, with an added prayer for his recovery. He knew that in the hospital window to the south stood Nell, fervent in her prayers for John's safety. He dreaded the scene which must transpire that night. He knew the pangs which would pierce Nell's heart when



she saw John. But it all must be met. It could not be shirked. He ran ahead and caught up with the stretcher bearers.

Little did our friend know that under his feet, on the very spot where he kept the Angelus that eventful day, was a trench of brave poilus who had also been buried alive, their graves and bayonets protruding from the ground. They had died as they stood, smothered by the falling earth of an exploding shell. It never entered his busy mind that this trench would never be opened; that these brave men were in their honored graves, covered by French soil and that this spot would be a national burial ground with a memorial erected over them to their everlasting memory. A shrine it will be to the everlasting memory of them who said, "They shall not pass," and held the trenches in the most unmerciful fire ever witnessed and stood at their post even unto death and forever after.

A hundred yards or so from the top of the hill, an ambulance met them. Depositing their precious burden, Dave and a comrade got in and were wheeled away towards Verdun. It was four miles from Fort Vaux, and about five miles from Le Mort Homme. They made the trip in record time. No attention was paid to the rough roads. "The good Americaine" must be saved. When they reached Verdun they drove at once to the Citadel and to the temporary hospital inside. Here surgeons hastily examined John and gave him first aid. This first aid was coming twelve hours late. They found the wound of the head bad but not necessarily fatal. It was near enough in front that he had a chance. His leg and arm could be set and would heal, but the crushed side was a different problem. There might be internal injuries which would prove fatal. While this first aid was being given, an ambulance was being prepared for the trip to the hospital at Souilly. The surgeons gave Dave very little hope, but as he got into the ambulance,

as it started rapidly for the hospital, he prayed as he had never prayed before for the life of his friend.

In an hour they were in the hospital at Souilley. John was in the operating room and Nell was the doctor's assistant. Dave had told an attendant to send in another assistant. He feared that Nell would break down when someone was so badly needed.

It was more than two hours before he saw them send John to a bed in the hospital. Nell was with him. He knew that she would be his nurse. He went in at once to the surgeons. They told him of the terrible battered and broken condition of his friend. They never had had a worse case. His left leg had a compound fracture, but that would likely get along. His broken arm would cause no bad trouble. His skull was fractured, but that would not necessarily prove fatal. Later, he would have to be operated on and his skull trephined and it would be all right. But they had found several ribs of his right side broken and his side was crushed. The lungs were impaired some, but they thought the liver and other organs had escaped and that if they could prevent infection, he had—well, say a ten per cent chance to recover.

Dave was sad. He gave his tears leave to come and they did. It was in a childish way that he begged and pleaded with the surgeons to save his friend. The scene was heart-rending.

Inside the hospital, at a little white cot by the window, was another scene. In the bed lay a human form bandaged beyond recognition, with no outward signs of life. He was beginning a great battle. It was the old battle between light and darkness, between life and death. He was already deep in the valley. The shadows were long and deep. His strength was slight, very slight. Had he enough to make the fight? Had he a chance to win?

Kneeling at his bed, her rosary in her hand, with the crucifix fixed in front of her upturned eyes, was Nell. This time she was not keeping the Angelus, but she was

praying that John might be given strength to fight his great battle. Long did she remain here. When she arose it was to take a seat at his side. She had begun her long vigil. She knew not how long the fight would take.

Is there a greater strain than that of sitting helplessly by and watching a friend dear to us fight his way back from death's door to consciousness? We know of none. If consciousness comes, then there is still the fight for life. For three days Nell sat there with only a little absence now and then, and that was forced on her. At the end of that time there was scarcely any more signs of life, but the heart action was a little stronger. The surgeons said this gave a little hope, although at any moment just a little flicker and all hope would be gone. In two more days there began to be signs of returning consciousness. He was breathing audibly now and the doctors thought the chances had come up to fifty per cent. Much depended on the condition when consciousness came. They had tried to arouse him. Once, when a French nurse near another patient had been lightly singing a French song, he had stirred slightly.

Dave had been almost as constant an attendant as Nell. He had relieved her all he could. The most he could do was to get her to leave the bedside a few minutes. But that helped some. Every day at sunset they were both there and kept the Angelus. They made no pretense. It was their religion now and they would keep it. The day that Dave saw John move a little when the nurse was singing, he had told Nell to sing a little to him, but she had been afraid to do so.

It was nearly Angelus time on the sixth day. Nell was at her accustomed place by the bedside and Dave had just come into the room. Nell was softly singing one of the late airs. There seemed in her voice a great yearning as if her arms were outstretched trying to pull back to life this soul which was about to take flight. Dave saw and heard her. He went to her side.



"Nell, that ain't the song for John. He don't know them new ones. Sing a home song. One of the old ones. One he will recognize. That will do good, I tell you."

Nell had a soft beautiful voice. Softly she began:

"The sun shines bright in my old Kentucky home,  
'Tis summer, the darkies are gay—"

There was a twitching of John's face. The muscles moved slightly.

"Go on, Nell! Go on!"

"The corn top's ripe and the meadow's in the bloom  
While the birds make music all the day."

Again the muscles of the face moved and twitched. His brow was wrinkled as if a great effort was being made to bring himself together.

"Go on, Nell. I tell you—go on."

"The young folks roll on the little cabin floor  
All merry, all happy and bright.  
By and by hard times comes a knocking at the door,  
Then my old Kentucky home, good-night."

Now there was a decided twitching around the eyes. The lips quivered a little. Uncle Dave was getting excited. The nurses and patients from a distance were all attention. But Nell laid her hand on his arm and resumed her song in the softest tones—

"Weep no more, my lady  
Oh, weep no more today.  
We will sing one song  
For my old Kentucky home—"

John's eyes opened. He gazed up into the face of Nell. At her side he saw Uncle Dave.

"This is Uncle Dave and the spirit of Nell—yes, the spirit of Nell." That was his thought. His gaze was fixed and weak as would be expected in his condition.

"For my old Kentucky home, far away," softly sang Nell.

"Nell!" It was just a moving of his lips without the shifting of his eyes. But the two watchers knew that consciousness had come to him they loved.

Nell stepped back a little while Dave bent over him and said:

"Well, old pal, how do you feel now?"

"Who was singing, Dave?" he whispered.

"Now who do you think it was, boy? Don't you know my good voice by this time?"

The doctors had cautioned about excitement when consciousness came. They were told some of the story and advised that Nell had better not be announced too suddenly, and more assuredly there must be no demonstration.

"Sounded like Nell."

With that he relapsed into slumber. But all were glad. This meant a gain of strength. It was the first blood of the battle and it was to his credit. That night the doctors administered some stimulants and some nourishment and advised that he be kept quiet till morning. Nell and Dave were beside themselves with hopes amid their tears.

"You remember what I always said about songs, and I told you some day I—"

"Do you think he will be awake and conscious in the morning?"

"Well, he is coming along now. If he isn't conscious, sing some more for him. Sing the same song."

The morning was a beautiful one. The sun was bright. Both Nell and Dave were up and at John's bedside very early. The doctors had forbade them staying near that night. He was sleeping and it seemed a refreshing sleep. He was breathing regularly.

About nine o'clock they sat there at his bedside. Nell began to hum the old tune very softly:

"Weep no more, my lady—  
Oh, weep no more today.  
We will sing one song  
For my old Kentucky home,  
For my old Kentucky home, far away."

John opened his eyes. It was clear that he was listening. When she had finished he was gazing at her face.

"Nell! Is it Nell?"

"Yes, John, it is Nell. How do you feel?"

"Is it Nell? Where are we?"

"We are here in the hospital, John. You were hurt. Don't you remember? How do you feel now?"

"Don't you know the old shell hole, pal? They were after you. But you did the work, old pal. How does your head feel?" This from Dave.

He stirred as if to feel his head, but only realized how completely he was bandaged. He was puzzled and a little excited. But Dave knew how to handle that.

"Oh, you are not badly hurt, old boy, arm broke and your leg is bruised, but what's that after all you did to the Boche."

"See battle, Dave?"

"Oh, boy! I should say I did. Greatest sight on earth!"

"Is it Nell?"

"Yes, John. I came to nurse you."

"Where were you?"

"Now, dear, you must not talk more. I'll tell you later. I am your nurse now. I'll get you some broth."

With this she left and Dave repeated the caution that he must talk no more, saying:

"Now, John, Nell is here. That is good news, isn't it? We are back at Souilley. You are wounded, but the doctor says you are getting along all right, but you must be quiet a day or so. Now don't talk any more today. Take your nourishment from Nell and then sleep a while."



There were two happy hearts at Souilley on that day—so happy were they that tears of joy flowed very freely.

“Uncle Dave, he’ll get well, won’t he?”

“I hope so. The Lord has been on our side so far. We must continue to hope. We shall see tomorrow. Doctor says he should gain a little by then.”

And so John Adams came out of the grave on Le Mort Homme, and back to life, and Nell came back into his life after so long an absence, and Uncle Dave was a happy man.

## CHAPTER XXVII

**I**T IS a slow, laborious process coming back from the valley of death. If one does so it is with much effort, much patience and a great amount of nursing. New life, vigor and entirely new ambition came to John Adams with the sight of Nell's face. Without her he might never have made the effort—the almost super-human effort to get well again. Nell was the nurse. She was relieved of her work with the surgeon and John was her sole patient. He must be kept quiet. He must do as the doctors said. In fact, he could not have done much different. He was so bandaged that he could hardly move if he had had the desire. Nell was at his side or close all the time, but they must not talk—not yet. He must conserve all his strength. It was hard to restrain him. He would ask questions. She wanted to answer them, but she must not do so now. So all she could do was quiet him and assure him that later they could talk about everything. It was a terrible ordeal when the doctor dressed his wounds. There was the usual danger of tetanus from all the wounds. Save for this, after a few days, they feared little from the arm and leg wounds. The head gave them some concern, but the side bade fair to be a serious affair. Therein lay the greatest danger. What would have been the proper care and position for the leg and arm, did not help or aid the side. So it was very difficult indeed.

One day, during the dressing incident, he fainted dead away and they all thought for a time that he was gone. He rallied and recovered, however. He was proving his great vitality. He received the very best of care just because it was he. His fame had grown in that sector because he was an American and because of what he

had done. All knew of "John, the American," who had been buried alive. He had broken the German line and it had been built of human bodies. His fame was great and he was loved by the French.

Days went by—each one adding a little to his strength. The bandages decreased until he looked a little more like a human being. He was allowed to talk a little, but most of his talking was limited to Uncle Dave, who was also near at hand most of the time. There was no extended conversation; not much about Nell. Of course, that subject was uppermost in John's mind. But since she was there he could be put off.

It was about two weeks after he was brought into the hospital. The day was bright and cheerful. It was morning. Outside he could see that spring was really at hand. Each day brought the usual bustle and hurry of new patients just arrived from the front. John had made progress satisfactory to the doctors. He was still far from well. In fact, he had not yet emerged from the danger period. The caution orders were still on, but were gradually being removed.

"Uncle Dave, where's Nell?"

"She is resting a little, now, John."

"Where has she been all the time?"

"You mustn't talk about that, now, John. She will tell you all about it later."

"When?"

"Oh, pretty soon, now. You are getting better pretty fast. Your strength is coming back."

"How is the battle going?"

It then occurred to Dave that this was the first inquiry he had made about the battle or the war.

"Why, don't you know you won the battle? That explosion of yours won the battle."

"Where is the line now?"

"The French have Le Mort Homme and the hills to the west, Forts Vaux and Douaumont."

"Where are the Boche?"



"Gone back over the hills to the north."

"For good?"

"No. Not so good as all that, but they have retreated to the north. They will continue to make attacks on this front, so all predict, but they cannot accomplish anything now."

"Well, I am glad of that."

"Do you know everyone is talking about you and what you did?"

"Why?"

"Well, because you did such a great thing. Your four comrades who were with you that night and who came back ahead of you were here yesterday to see you but the doctors would not let them in. They are coming later. They were like kids when they couldn't get in. They stood there and cried. I talked to them and told them in my excellent French, how you were getting along and assured them I would carry to you their best wishes. They assured me you are the one who kept the Germans from passing. You are a hero, my boy."

"Well, I am not so much interested in being a hero as I am in knowing that we drove the Germans back to the north whence they came. They never did get into Verdun and now they never will."

"You are right. What happened when you were buried alive?"

Just then Nell came in and took her seat by Dave. John at once tried to change the subject, but Dave wouldn't let him.

"Nell, John and I are talking just a little. I have been telling him what a hero he is. We shan't talk much, but I want him to tell us a little bit of what happened when he was buried alive."

"Was I buried alive? You mean in the shell hole? Well, I came up the ravine and thought I would get back to our trenches. It wasn't more than a hundred yards up the hill to a communication trench where I would be under cover. All at once, whiz! came a shell

up the ravine from a gun they had moved down close to the edge of the ravine during the night. It exploded a few rods past me and then some sniper discovered me as I ran from one shell hole to another. Every time I would move they were after me. I knew I would have to keep under cover for a while. So I got in as good a shell hole as you can find on Le Mort Homme and Lord knows there are all kinds and sizes, and lay there. After a while I heard the explosion and saw the bodies and machine guns hurled high in the air. Then the shots came hot and heavy. I had thought I would run to the trench when the explosion occurred, but they had moved down too close during the night and I guess they expected a charge, so they covered the ravine with rifle shots. I had to lay still. I heard our artillery come into action and I knew they would catch hell and I hoped soon to get a chance for the trench. The last I remember is a terrible avalanche of something and the next I knew I was trying to get something out of my mouth. I guess I must have fainted for a few moments. Then I pulled myself out in the air and soon you came up. The last I remember was your face over me."

"Then you don't know you lay buried from about six o'clock in the morning until late in the afternoon?"

"No. It couldn't have been that way."

"But it was, and you were just about half out of the ground when we found you. That was almost five o'clock in the afternoon. Oh, you are a great hero, my boy. Isn't he, Nell?"

"He surely is, Uncle Dave. Everybody says that."

"That was one day, my boy, you didn't keep your Angelus. But at the top of Le Mort Homme I stopped just a moment behind the stretcher bearers and kept it for you."

"Yes, in that window to the north there, I kept it, too, on that day. I had a peculiar feeling too, a strange, nervous feeling. Something seemed to tell me the line of communication was broken. But it wasn't. It was

just being restored. Now you clear out of here, Dave. John must not talk any more. He must take his nap."

"No, don't go yet. I want to—"

"You'll do nothing more until after a nap."

She said it very softly but firmly. It was a pleasure to obey her. So he obeyed in this instance.

Some days after this the doctors said he could talk a little while at a time but he mustn't move or exert himself otherwise and Nell let him talk.

"Now, Nell, you have put me off and put me off in telling me about yourself. I want you to tell me now. Did you find my pictures when I was brought in here?"

"Yes, here they are in your knapsack at the head of your bed. There is a picture of your mother, one of me, and a letter which no one has opened. We are all glad of that, too."

"Was that all? Where is my picture of Sunset Hill?"

"Oh, yes, that is there, too. Who made it?"

"Now, Nell, you know you made that and sent it to me from Cincinnati."

"Why, John, you never knew me to be an artist, did you?"

"No, but you did it. Now didn't you?"

"Well, suppose I did? What do you think of it?"

"You know where I carried it, don't you? That tells you what I think of it. It is great."

"What did you think when you received it?"

"I nearly went wild because it told me you were alive and you know we never were absolutely sure of this before. I have never lost hope, but we could not know for sure. We hunted all over Cincinnati for you as we came over. Where were you?"

"Not in Cincinnati."

"Where, then?"

"Far from there. In Rome."

"Have you been there all the time?"

"Yes."

"And your Aunt Fannie, is she there now?"



"Yes."

"Now tell me all about it. Don't leave anything out."

"No; I cannot do that now. It will tire you too much, but I'll tell you a little."

So Nell told him how she had left Kentucky and of the trip to Rome and of taking up art work and of a little of her success. She told him also of her arrangement with William Daniels, so she was supplied with funds and had a communication with the old home place so she could keep informed about John.

"When he cabled me you were leaving for Europe to join the French Army, and that Dave was going into the Red Cross to be near you, he told me he would advise later where you would be. It wasn't long until Dave had cabled him your location, he informed me, and at once I came to Souilley, where they needed nurses, offered my service and have been here ever since."

"You dear girl—you have had a time of it, haven't you?"

"I think you are the one who has had a time of it. You have lain here now just eight weeks tomorrow. When you came you were right on the brink and now you are just out of danger, but a long ways from being a well man."

"Oh, well, that's nothing. I have found you again. When I can get out of here—"

Then he thought that he was still a soldier with a duty to France. It had not occurred to him that he must go back to the service when he was able. In fact, he had given it no thought at all until now. Yes, he would have to leave Nell when he was able. But he would do it. If the Boche had gone back to the north maybe it would not be long until the war was over. He was silent, and Nell knew why.

"John, the doctors tell me you cannot go back into the service. It will be months before you are well again. You will need a lot of care before you are a well man and I shall give you that care—Dave and I."

"You and Dave have been real guardian angels for me. How will I ever repay you?"

"Forget that. We are only doing our duty."

And so from time to time during the next few weeks, they talked until John knew the whole story of Nell's absence with the exception of what she had actually accomplished in art and a few other things which Nell and Dave agreed to keep for future revealment. They talked of home and the old times and much of the Angelus.

"Let me tell you, Nell, I don't believe I would have held out if it hadn't been for the Angelus. Many a day it has been the one anchor which seemed to hold me in the world. Often I longed during the day for sunset when I could talk to you. Such a comfort did I get many times that it was almost like actually seeing you. I am a firm believer in this mental telepathy, or whatever it is. I am sure we have communicated."

"So am I, John. It has been as great a comfort to me. When we were five thousand miles apart, I am sure I received wave thoughts from you. It has been like the radio. Our thoughts have carried through the air and across the seas. You have done a great service over here and you are famous."

"Well, if I can't go back in the army when I am able, we shall go back home. Oh, but that will be fine, won't it?"

"Yes, it will, John, but it will be some time before we can do that. You must be well and strong before we attempt it."

"Yes, but as soon as I can get out I will get along fast and soon we can—"

That was as far as he got. There was a commotion outside. There seemed to be a crowd. Soldiers were marching. Something was happening.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

UNUSUAL and extraordinary scenes were common during the war, but such as occurred this particular morning in the hospital at Souilley were in no sense common or usual occurrences. To see and meet with important personages was nothing out of the ordinary, but a combination of circumstances and great men such as took place this day was unusual.

There came into the east door of the great room a French general, followed by his aides. They came immediately to John's bed. Nell and Dave were disturbed and excited. They did not know the significance. It seemed too farcical for a visit. When the general produced a paper with seals and ribbons, Nell knew John was to be honored, and so he was. And such an honor! The general, after greeting, addressed John. He told him that his country, France, was everlastingly indebted to him for his services and heroic deeds:

"You Americans and the French have long been fast friends, and now our bonds of friendship are stronger. You left your home and came to our army without any duty to do so. You have endangered your life when you had not a patriotic cause for doing so. You have fought with us against the common enemy without any obligation to do so, save your love of liberty and justice and right and love for France. You took up with sons of France the cry, 'On ne passe pas.' And when Le Mort Homme was bathed in blood you did not falter. You did a great heroic deed above and beyond your duty. The line held firm, and, thank God, they did not pass. France does not forget your service and your aid. France does not forget your great valor when in No Man's Land you offered your life that a great deed



might be done. In that deed of valor, now known over all France, you turned the tide of battle and sent the enemy back to the north. It was a deed of valor which makes heroes of men. Your courage and valor has made a hero of you. We are glad that you will live. We love you as a brother. And now, sir, France—my France and your France—has commissioned me to bestow upon you the greatest honor she can give to a son, and it affords me great pleasure to bestow upon you the ‘*Médaille Militaire*,’ and in the name of France to thank you for your service.”

He then pinned upon John’s breast the medal and with French custom imprinted a kiss upon each cheek. Then standing at salute he awaited a reply. Under such circumstances it is always a guess what an individual will do. John did not know himself. He knew he could not salute, for his right hand was securely bandaged. He did the next best thing. He saluted with his left hand and said:

“What I have done is only what is being done at the front every day. The act does not deserve this recognition. I have aided France because I love liberty and justice, and I love the French people. You are welcome to my mite of assistance. I only wish— Well, well! If it ain’t Jacques and Tom and Pierre and ‘Bumpus!’ All alive, too! Well, well! *Comment allez-vous?*”

This was his exclamation as he suddenly discovered his friends whom he had last seen on that morning when he had insisted on them going back to the lines ahead of him. The general moved back, greatly pleased at this friendship for his comrades. He knew the whole story and also knew comradeship. He stepped aside and motioned for the comrades to come up. They did so, and warmly greeted John, so warmly that the tears again came, “as kids,” as Dave had put it. They knew what John had done and they were glad. It was the mingled feeling of gladness and anxiety which filled their breasts.

After a few more words of good wishes and cheer,

the party withdrew, leaving John and Nell and Dave in a kind of dazed condition. Each realized that France had honored John to her fullest ability. The *Medaille Militaire* was the greatest honor which could be bestowed. All realized that. Dave was the first to speak.

"Well, old pal, I knew you'd do something sometime. I just wish old Bill could have been here and seen it."

"Now, Dave! Let well enough alone. Old Bill would have been glad of my honor."

"He would like— Well, yes, I guess he would."

"Oh, isn't it grand, John?" said Nell. "You deserve it all, and more. The doctor told me this morning you are doing fine and are now out of danger if you take care of yourself. That's good news, too, isn't it?"

"Gosh! but that general, or whoever he was, was a handsome brute, wasn't he?"

"Uncle Dave! You surely do use homely expressions."

"Well, I suppose I should use my French all the time here. But seems like I run out of words so quickly and then it don't always just exactly convey my meaning."

"I notice you always speak plain enough so that you make yourself understood."

"That always was characteristic of Dave, Nell. I am proud of what I have done over here because it helps those sad faces of men who have given up so much—friends, sons and homes. Look at my four comrades, each one of them has given a son and one of them two. I tell you that is about enough. When you have given up that much, your country is about all there is left to give. For my part, I can't do too much for these people. I am glad I did it and I'm glad to know about it."

"Tomorrow I am going back up to the front for a few days," said Dave. "I guess it is quiet there now, but I must see what I can do. I have been here a long time with you. Now that you are getting along fine I must see what other things I can do. And then I want to

hear them talk of you and your great deeds. You are a hero, my boy—a hero.”

“Oh, cut out the bragging, Dave. Give all the boys my best wishes and tell them I’ll try and come back and help finish it if they don’t work too fast.”

Dave and Nell went out together. That night they had a long talk. If there had been ears to hear, there would have been plans discovered. But there were no outside ears and so no plans leaked out.



## CHAPTER XXIX

**E**VEN a hero gets tired of a hospital. The hospital at Souilley was more of a shambles than a hospital during those years of the war around Verdun. Each day brought new casualties. Some of them were slight, some with wounds little short of complete demolition. It was frequently said during the war that death was the dearest event that could come to a soldier at Verdun, and that they gladly welcomed it, so great were the hardships in this sector. With this condition going on all the time and with new arrivals daily at the hospital, John's nerves were kept busy. Nell and Dave had great concern for him. They were afraid of the consequences. He was getting along well enough in every way except for his side. His head and arm were doing well enough, but the side, with its terrible injury still caused them much concern.

"I tell you, Dave, we must do something to divert his mind. He will be here for weeks yet and he takes everything so seriously that I am afraid he will wear himself out before he gets well. He is bound to know all about every man brought in and how badly he is injured. It is too much disturbance for his mind. He should be quiet, and yet they tell us he cannot be moved yet. What shall we do?"

"I have thought a lot. I don't know what to do. If he could be up and around I could manage it somehow. I have thought of one thing but I don't know if it would appeal to you."

"Let's have it. It will be an idea for discussion, anyway."

"Well, I've thought maybe if you would go away it might give him thrill and diversion enough to keep him from these other things."

"I thought of that, too, but then I don't know just how it would affect him now for me to go. I could go to Rome and as soon as he is able you could bring him there."

"I believe it is worth talking to the doctor about. I'll do it tonight."

And so he did. In fact, they together talked to the doctor and told him their idea. He favored it. He said if John could go back to his thinking and longing about Nell, he would probably get along faster than worrying about every wounded man who came into the hospital. His advice would be to do it that way and not to let him know where Nell was or anything about her. They decided to do it that way and prepared accordingly.

Nell arranged for her withdrawal from the service. She easily obtained her discharge under the circumstances.

Now it was her turn to worry. She did not much fancy the idea of leaving John there when she had just found him, even though he was in the good hands of Uncle Dave. She thought of his worry and of what injury this worry might do him. But she concluded it would be better than present conditions. She gave Dave something more than a million instructions and arranged to leave on a certain day. That day was now just one day off. Next morning early she left the hospital without ceremony and proceeded on her journey.

It was not until late in the afternoon that John missed her. When Dave came in John asked for her and Dave told him he had not seen her since morning. Night came and then morning and still she did not appear. Dave told him she seemed to have left the place. When the doctor came around he told John she had gone.

"She left yesterday morning on the train. I supposed you knew it."

"No, I knew nothing of it. Did you, Dave?"

"She did not bid me goodbye." Dave, being a preacher, seemed to be a poor liar.

"Well, that may be, but did you know she was going?"

This time Dave did not hesitate. "No, sir. I was as ignorant of it as you. I don't know what the little hussy means."

"Well, we won't call her names now, perhaps she has some plans and she will be back soon."

But day after day rolled on and no word from Nell. Dave pretended to worry for a few days until he was sure John was worrying enough, then he began to take the view of it that she had gone to Rome and would be back soon. They would hear from her. They had great discussions about the probabilities of her returning. Or would she write and have them come down there as soon as John was able? John doubted if they would be invited. He could not fathom it. But he was making improvement because he had forgotten himself and the other wounded men. There came a day when he could sit up and finally get around the grounds a little. Then his progress was rapid.

One day he had a great surprise. A telegram came for him. Naturally, he supposed it to be from Nell. He eagerly tore it open and read:

"Old Bill sends his best regards and congratulates you on licking the whole German Army. You are a great man and I am still with you and love you.

BILL HENDERSON."

"Now don't that beat all? Well, I sure am glad that old Bill is still holding true."

"Now, John, you need never have a care about old Bill. When he gives his word it is good as old wheat in the bin. He would fight for you. I never will forget the trimming you gave him in that speech. It was some speech. That was almost as great an act as your great record in No Man's Land."

"Now, Dave, I was not trying to lick old Bill. I was arguing to him through the crowd, that's all."



"Yes, I know, and you argued some, too. The argument was effective. It was a great good. I have always been very glad."

"Well, I am very glad to hear from old Bill, but I would have been greater pleased if it had been from Nell. Do you think something has happened to her, Dave?"

"Now for the thousandth time, I tell you no. In a few days we are going to hear from her or see her."

In this he was right because he had been talking to the doctor who had told him John could leave the hospital in another two weeks, and he telegraphed the good news to Nell. Just before the end of the two weeks, he received another telegram, as follows:

"I will meet you two boys in Venice next  
Sunday at the Danielli Hotel—Love to you both.  
NELL."

"Well, I'll be—"

"Here, here! Cut out the cussin'. If you must swear, do it in French!" said Dave.

"Look at that. It is enough to make a wooden Indian swear. She is not content to get up and leave without a word, but she thinks all we have to do is to run around over the world to see her."

"Well, what's the matter with this?"

"What's the matter with it? Are you crazy, too? Don't you know I am in the hospital and still in the army, and that Venice is some distance away from here?"

"Oh, well, we can pick us up a magic carpet somewhere Sunday morning and go over for a few minutes."

"Don't be a fool, Dave. What do you think of this telegram?"

"Why, I think we will be there."

"How?"

"By train, I guess would be the best and quickest."

"How can I leave?"

"Well, sir, if you must know it, all at once. Here is

your honorable discharge from the French Army. You have your honors and the love and admiration of this great government. The doctor told me yesterday that you can leave the hospital any time now provided you go some place where you can be quiet and have good care for some six months. I obtained my leave. So there you are."

"Yes; so there you are—except you must have become an awful liar. Between the lines I read that you telegraphed Nell yesterday and told her all about it and that you knew all the time where she has been and why."

"Well, now, yer honor, you are not far off on any of this. I do not know just exactly where she has been every minute or anything like that, but—"

"But you have been lying to me all the time."

"Lying by prescription, John, not by choice or by note. Doctor's orders and Nell's orders, and I reckon, order or no order, if it was good for you I'd be doing it anyway."

That settled John. He could say no more, except to ask the necessity for any lying at all. Then Dave told him the whole story and their scheme. It satisfied him and at the same time proved to him again the loyalty of his friends.

## CHAPTER XXX

IT IS a treat to go across northern Italy under ordinary circumstances, but on this day, when Dave and John had taken leave of the hospital and their new friends and were on the train for Venice, it was war times. No train service was good now and this train went close to the line of battle so it had all the disadvantages of the time. They were used to small comforts by now and got along.

"I have always heard of the Lion of St. Mark's. I want to see him and twist his tail. St. Mark is buried in Venice. When we stand at his tomb we will be carried back further in time than we ever have been before."

"Just so we meet Neil. I am not caring so much about anything else."

"You don't fear the Lion then, nor want to see the Doges' Palace, or the great clock, or the Grand Canal, and all the little canals? Well, you are a funny one."

"Guess I am not my old self, Dave. Sometimes I feel that I never shall be again."

"Oh, well, there is enough left of you to do a lot, anyway."

Nell met them at the railroad station and had a gondola ready for their conveyance to the hotel. This ride was a great event for Dave. He knew the streets in Venice were all canals, but had little conception of what it was like. He was greatly interested as the old palaces were pointed out. He realized that they had stood here with their feet in the water for centuries; in fact, since that time when Venice had her aspirations to be mistress of the world of trade and made a good effort, too. Most of these palaces had belonged to the Doges



and were grand palaces, still owned by the nobility. If he was interested in all these things he simply went into ecstasies when they went under the Rialto. He was a great lover of Shakespeare and had never dreamed he would be fortunate enough to see the place where Shylock had done much of his business. Later, he walked across the old bridge and saw that the "Merchants of Venice" were still doing business there, each side being lined with stalls and all kinds of goods for sale.

Venice to them all was a delightful place. Dave enjoyed it more than any of them, however, because of his simple and complete interest in all things new to him.

Next day they traveled on to Rome. It would take volumes to tell of Uncle Dave's excursions about Rome. He was to remain there two weeks and he made every hour count. Few persons have done Rome so well in a month's stay. Aunt Fannie was his chief companion, except when tired out from his long tramps. First, he must see St. Peter's. Later, he had an audience with the Pope. This impressed him very much, because he was complimented on what he had contributed to the war and John was praised for his great heroism. Then he must see the Coliseum and go through all the palaces of the Caesars on Palatine Hill. He must stand where Nero stood while Rome burned. He stood at the tomb of St. Peter in St. Peter's Church, and later was shown the place on the mountain where he was crucified, head downwards. He saw the very room where St. Peter and St. Paul were imprisoned. He shuddered when shown the little door into a tunnel or kind of sewer leading down to the Tiber. It was a part of all sentences of death that the body of the convicted person be thrown into the Tiber. He stood at the very railing at Caesar's Court, where St. Peter and St. Paul had stood when arraigned. He saw where St. John was buried. He saw the sacred stairs brought from Pilate's Court, down which Christ had walked after His sentence to death.

He stood in the Forum and tried to imagine the tragedy of Caesar's death. He explored the Catacombs and saw where the Christians had begun their early struggles. The Catacombs affected him more than anything else. As he walked along with the pleasant and interesting monk, who was guiding him, and could see the bones lying in the rude tombs which had been broken open, he wondered who the particular one was and what had been his manner of death. He was greatly interested in the stories of St. Cecelia and St. Sebastian. All in all, Uncle Dave took enough information and knowledge away with him to last any man a lifetime.

He was always proud to relate that the villa in Rome was directly over one of the Catacombs and that directly under them lay the bones of the early Christians and that in sight of the villa was the church "Quo Vadis," with all its memories and histories, to say nothing of the splendid view away to the east, ending in the Sabine Hills. He could see Frascati and the Papal Villa and could follow the Via Appia until it crossed the hills. Oh, it was great for him. He enjoyed it all and nearly talked them all to death. At the end of two weeks he sailed for home. It was agreed that the others should follow as soon as John had recovered sufficiently. This would be several months.

## CHAPTER XXXI

“MY CONTENTION is that art is just frozen music. Some way the artist just catches the notes and translates them to the universal language—pictures—and they are held there.”

“Well, that is a nice thought, anyway, Nell; I little dreamed you would ever be an artist. When you used to sing at home I knew you liked it because you put your whole self into it. But I never dreamed your ability extended to the other arts. I am glad.”

“I shall probably never do much more at art. It has served its purpose for me. It occupied my mind when I was most distracted. I gave myself completely to it. Maybe that is why I succeeded in a small way.”

“From what these masters say and the way they rave over your work, I would say you have succeeded in no small way, but in a very big creditable way. It certainly has made it so I have had a wonderful opportunity to see the art of Rome. The Vatican, the Palace Borghese, and all the others. It has been wonderful. I feel so good now I hardly know I was so battered up at Verdun. But that has been more than six months ago and I ought to be getting well, if I ever shall.”

“Oh, you are practically well now. Don’t you love Italy and Rome?”

“Yes, I do, Nell. I shall be sorry when we sail, much as I want to get back home.”

“A month from now we shall go. Uncle Dave can tell you all about it when you get there. He will keep up the interest.”

“The trouble will be that he will have told it all before I get there and nothing will be left for me.”



"That's so. But you can talk about art. That never interested Uncle Dave."

"I'm afraid I am not qualified for that, even at home."

So the days ran on very speedily. John spent much of the time reading and lying in the Court. As he lay there during those wonderful days, beneath the Italian sky, he could look first to the west at the dome of St. Peter's and then to the east at the Appian Way and the Tomb of Cecelia Metella. This villa was in a line between them. Some pine trees in the yard seemed to have been planted in a line with both, as were some others a little ways further to the east at the entrance of St. Callixtus' Catacombs. These Romans had been a wonderful people for art and symmetry in everything. Now and then there would come a day which would remind him for all the world of a day in the hills at home. It was the same sky; the same clear atmosphere; the same fleecy clouds. On those days he was not sad but reminiscent. He thought of the return home. Back home! Since he had been in the Army and seen all that awful life, he had learned the full interpretation of home. It was not a new meaning but a fuller meaning. "Going back home" meant more to him than it ever had before. Not because, as he analyzed it, he was farther away in miles, but because he had drawn closer to the other world than he had ever been before.

"We can creep out and out, closer and closer to the shadowy line, until we are almost across—our backs to time, our faces to eternity—and then we come back, but we cannot cross the line and ever come back."

This ran through his mind as he gazed up into the sky on one of those days. He thought—just thought—as sometimes a man will. Not day-dreams or plans, but just thoughts. Perhaps then a man thinks without making thoughts his aim and some good ones come through the mind then, too.

And so we come up to the day of the first chapter of our story, that day when John Adams was sufficiently

recovered to make the journey home. Tomorrow was the day of departure. He was glad and he was sad. The last few days had been given up to thinking over the past of his life—his and Nell's—and the lives of all who touched theirs. He had reviewed them all. He had summed up all of his life to date. He had taken stock of himself. Yes, as had the Jews of old—he had measured himself by the ten commandments. He did not fall so far short in the test. He had tried. He had accomplished. He had tried in all instances to do his best. Some things had counted for him, he knew. But it seemed there was yet so much to do and so little done. He had not dared as yet to make plans. He knew not whether his battered body would stand active work again. If it would, he surely would engage again in his insurance business. That to him was the greatest of all businesses.

He thought of all the events since the day Nell had told him and Dave goodbye in his office and had gone away to visit her friends down the river. He had left nothing out. There was Betty Allen and that affair and he could not find in his actions any wrong to censure. He forgot not the Angelus which had anchored him to life, and he thought then how important it is for every person to have an aim in life with something to act always as an anchor. This had been his anchor. In his early days he had thought little, if any, about prayer. But since he had been keeping his Angelus for so many years, he had grown to know that it was only a prayer, a prayer out into the void space but always directed, as he now analyzed it, to a Supreme Being who is the Director of all things and who is the final authority on all matters. And he thought how long people had been looking up and pleading for favors. He thought of the wise men of the east on their journey, guided by the Star of Bethlehem. Their trust and their faith had been in the same God to whom he and Nell had directed the words of their Angelus. And then he argued with him-

self. Even granting that prayers may not be answered, the good to the individual who puts his mind through the process of prayer is ample reward. It is a source of good which comes in no other way. No man or woman can help but be better because of a prayer, no matter whether it be a prayer coming from some great necessity or just the natural habit of daily clearing the mind by serious thought. In any event, it places the individual in a good frame of mind and brings him nearer to the true, honest man than anything else can. It is a self analysis, a self measurement and a great good. John was glad he had kept his Angelus for so many years. He knew they would always keep it. They had agreed to do so and they were agreed on the great benefit of it.

These had been a part of John's thoughts on that day when Nell aroused him from his reverie. Yes, he had gone over it all. Their lives had been so varied. There had been so many partings of the way. Now they had all converged into one great highway which seemed to stretch away to the future without curve or change. Their lives now were together—would they continue together? Who could tell? No one. Again faith and hope must be the important part of their plans. And so it was that they were going back home with plans which carried their lives along this great highway, together with faith and hope that He who had heard their Angelus would guide them safely along and give them their share of the pleasures and comforts of life.



## CHAPTER XXXII

**I**N ORDINARY times a voyage from Naples to New York is a long one, but during the year 1917 it was disagreeable indeed. The best ships were not in service, nor was the service on the boats they used anything to brag about. But this was not to deter John and Nell and Aunt Fannie in their trip home. It was the early part of October when they sailed. The voyage of the Mediterranean was a delight, if the balance of it was not so good. The effect of the air and sea was good for John and he improved further as they voyaged home.

They landed in New York and claimed their reservations for home. The hearts of all were quickened as they left the station on the last part of their journey.

It is said that there is nothing new under the sun. Everyone of us mortals just kind o' take this as the gospel truth, while every day proves the falseness of it to us. There are new combinations of old things just as interesting and just as pleasant to us as if it were all new. A naturalist takes a lot of old roses and by crossing and blending and grafting and working with them, makes a grand new rose which startles the world with its brilliancy. He makes a brand new melon out of old ones. A new apple delights the palate, made as we are told from a crossing of old ones well known. We are told there are only seven original plots in all literature. Everything else is an adaption of them and yet we approve hundreds of books each year as successes. They delight us. They please us. Probably all of the more than four hundred variations of Cinderella would interest us. At any rate, we do know that for thousands of years it has entertained both young and old and is

still as entertaining as it ever was. Every story where rags are turned into golden cloth, or where wishes are fulfilled, makes us think of Cinderella and her golden slipper. And so long as the heart thrills to romance and men and women dream day-dreams and hope that they will come true, Cinderella will be a real living character. So long as men feel as men and hearts are true, we shall love Robin Hood, no matter in which story-clothes he is dressed. So might we not conclude that for that part of the human race who are alive, active, alert, progressive and successful, each day brings just as many new thoughts, acts, events and things as the very earliest times? Such persons see an opportunity in every situation and a teacher in every person they meet. This has little to do with our story except to prepare the reader for what we are soon to say.

John Adams was not expecting new things on his return home. He expected to meet old friends and grasp their hands. He would embrace Uncle Dave, his brother and other relatives. But we who are on the inside of this story know that Nell Henderson was directing affairs and that the day of their arrival would see the consummation of plans and would present thoughts, actions and things to John which would be as new as the first thoughts of the human race. No matter how old the story was, it would be all new to him. Nell knew the general plans. It was she who had sent Dave home to execute plans she had in mind. Dave was a man to do what he was sent to do and he executed them well. Dave knew when they would arrive and had arranged accordingly. Nell had so planned it that they would arrive on the afternoon train.

We told you at the outset that Great Bend could not boast a railroad. It had not yet been favored by the railroad magnates. It was some five miles to the nearest station. The train was due at this station at five o'clock in the afternoon. That was when they were to arrive. It was when they did arrive.

Before they left Rome, John had urged Nell to fix a time when they would be married. She put him off, or rather made it indefinite. He had urged that same day in October—an October six long years ago—was to have been the time, why not this October?

“Let’s wait, John, until we get home and then fix the time. We’ll make it soon. But let’s be married there at home. I don’t care if it is the very day we arrive, but let’s wait till we get there. We shall feel better over it.”

“It would not do the day we get there, for we would have no arrangements made and we have both been away a long time. Well, we’ll not wait many days after we get home. People usually go away for their honeymoon, but here we are going home for ours.”

“That will make it all the dearer, don’t you think?”

“Maybe so. Maybe so. But it is agreed now we are to have no waiting.”

“Not a moment’s delay.”

John took this to mean relatively no delay. He did not know that Nell meant it literally. William Daniels had been further used in Nell’s plans. He had fully cooperated with Dave to carry out her every wish.

Dave met them at the station in one of the few automobiles which the country afforded. It was the best one because it had been a part of Nell’s plan that he buy it for her. They all got in and leisurely proceeded down the fine old road toward Great Bend. It occurred to John that they delayed a great deal at the station before starting and that a lot of time was being killed on the way. But his suggestions and his impatience did not hurry things.

“What are the plans, Uncle Dave?” said Nell, when they were about halfway home.

“Well, you don’t expect much plans here in the old Kentucky hills, not like you would find in Rome. If I had had Caesar, the head ‘garcon’ at the Grand Hotel in Rome to prepare all this for me, I could have had



some plans. But being as how I had to do it all myself, the plans are somewhat meager. But you'll just have to put up with them. Uncle Dave did the best he could. We will go at once to Nell's house where old Bill and I have prepared a little meal for you. Then you will be in the hands of your friends."

"Now, Dave, I hope you haven't invited in the whole town. We are tired, you know."

"Don't worry, John. The whole town don't need an invitation when a conquering hero returns. You remember they used to put on a regular show in the streets of Rome when one of those conquering heroes returned."

"Yes, but I'm no part of a show. Not today, anyway."

"Oh, well, we'll get along some way, John. I guess they won't want to do more than greet you and shake hands tonight."

"They better not."

Dave was all smiles and seemed perfectly contented at what he knew to be the plans. It was as beautiful a day as ever the wonderful fall in the mountains afforded. The sun was warm and bright. The air had just the slightest tang in it, just enough to make it real enjoyable. Nature had just begun to paint the forests. Here and there were bright red leaves among the green, and golden browns, purples and then the rusty leaves of the beech trees which were a color all their own. Along the fences the vines were contending with each other as to which one could be the gayest. The fields were not too brown. The fall rains had favored them. So these travelers agreed that nowhere in old world or new had they seen nature more beautiful than right here at home.

The road, as most of them do in this part of the state, wound down a river valley and along one side next the hill. The old Henderson farm was at the mouth of this little river. When the road came to their place it ran up over the point of the hill by the house and on down

to the town. The house stood on the point and commanded a view of the entire town and of all of Sunset Hill.

As they came to the farm and started up the hill, John became very fidgety; Nell was eager; but Uncle Dave was like a kid with new boots. On they went—they came opposite the house, but the driver did not turn in. John had been looking in. He thought it strange that he saw no one around. He looked to the town. He was astounded.

Never in all his life had he seen the old town so completely dressed up. Flags everywhere! Decorations everywhere! And Sunset Hill! What in the world was the matter with it? Who had spoiled his dear old hill? He could not speak. He was not conscious that Nell was nestling very close to him and that Dave was quiet. The car went slowly on. He turned and looked at Nell. There was a great pleasure written all over her face. John spoke first and in a sad voice:

“Dave, who has built a house on Sunset Hill?”

“Nell has, John.”

“Who has?”

“Nell and you.”

“Well, I’ll be ——.”

“Here, now, none of that. Say it in French.”

“Nell, have you and this old sinner perpetrated another job on me?”

“No, John. But Sunset Hill is yours—yours and mine—for all time.”

“Glory be for that. But who and where and how? Tell us about it.”

“Say, young feller. What do you suppose I been doing since I left Rome?”

“Well, I’ll say you have been busy.”

“Busy enough that I made ’em all step some to be ready for today. We go to your home for supper. Old Bill is head butler tonight and his sons and your brother

are 'charge de affaires.' I am chaplain and all around general manager."

"Nell, there is no church there as in your painting, but that is a beautiful home you have erected there. It is the most beautiful spot in all the world and the dearest to us. Here we'll keep our Angelus always. And by the way, it is just time now as the sun is bathing old Sunset Hill in his last long rays. Let's keep it here and now together."

It was kept in a different way. Lives which had been parted were now joined again. These persons were not separated by miles. They were joined—let us hope, forever. So today lips met lips and thus as the others of the party sat uncovered, John and Nell kept their Angelus here at home.

Through the town they drove. They made just one stop in front of the Courthouse where a crowd of citizens were assembled. In a few well chosen words John and Nell were welcomed home. He was presented with a great wreath of roses. It was a real welcome of a returning hero, and he felt the honor keenly. He told them so. They were not delayed long. Then they drove home. John loved the drive up to the house as much as he had loved the hill. Instead of spoiling the hill, it would beautify the place. And this was to be home for him and Nell.

It seemed to him all the town was gathered at the new home on Sunset Hill. Those who were not there were rapidly coming. When they went in he saw the beauty Nell had wrought—a great living room, just as he and she had talked. To the east there were great, high windows and to the west more high windows—always would there be sunshine and from the town below these windows, glistening in the sunshine, would always be golden windows. It was all decorated for the occasion with great banks of roses and autumn leaves. The hands of friends had been here to make it all a fitting welcome for them.



"My dear old friend, I welcome you home. God bless you for your great work. It was as great over there as it was here. I am your friend forever—and Nell's. My! but I'm glad you are back! Welcome home to you all. Welcome to Sunset Hill."

Thus spoke old Bill Henderson and he meant it all.

Dave took them in and showed them around a little bit and then came back to the great living room. It was already filled to overflowing. He led Nell and John to the end of the room and took his place in front of them. John thought, "Here is where we get another welcome and more speeches. I wish they would wait." Dave stood a few moments and then began a prayer. Everyone was so still. It was all so strange and Nell at his side scarcely breathed. The prayer finished, Uncle Dave took from his pocket a paper which he held in his hand. He began to talk—to tell them how glad Great Bend was at their return and how much he and all of them loved John and Nell. It seemed that he was closing his remarks. He came up to them and taking them each by the hand he clasped their hands and began the marriage ceremony. John gasped and then he saw it all. He was pleased. It was as he would have it. His dear old friend! The ceremony was finished.

As soon as Dave's voice had died away, the strains of a beautiful pipe organ in the other end of the room peeled forth—they were playing "My Old Kentucky Home." When it was finished the whole audience sang it. Their voices filled the great room and died away in an echo over the valley. Immediately there was heard outside that music which is so familiar to the South—the negroes with their banjos and in the true southern style, they too sang "My Old Kentucky Home." This all seemed the very height of welcome. They were sure, according to the ancient custom, the glass had been filled so full that it did not need a bay leaf to prove their hearty welcome. But there was yet the bay leaf to be

added. Mounting an improvised platform, Uncle Dave stood a few moments, his white hair and rugged features making a grand picture against the draperies. Then in the voice of age and earnestness, he too sang:

“The sun shines bright in my Old  
Kentucky Home,  
'Tis summer and the darkies are gay”

All stood as still as death—not another sound any place. No accompaniment would have added to that voice.

“The corn top's ripe and the meadow's  
in the bloom,  
And the birds make music all the day.”

His voice rolled forth, not as a finished singer, but as a man who was earnestly delivering his supreme effort.

“The young folks roll on the little  
cabin floor,  
All merry, all happy and bright.  
Bye and bye, hard times comes a knock-  
ing at the door,  
Then my Old Kentucky Home Goodnight.”

It was a great effort. Tears now were streaming from every eye. John and Nell did not try to control their emotions. They knew their old friend too well. Many good turns he had done them. Much advice had they had from him. But this was an honor and so intended. It was wonderful. Then softly the aged voice took up the chorus:

“Weep no more my lady  
Oh weep no more today,”

All were weeping. But the tears were those of joy, and prayers for Dave Daniels were going up from many in the room.

“We will sing one song,  
For my Old Kentucky Home”—

Not one in the room but thanked God for the native land. “My Old Kentucky Home”—no other people could claim such a land as home.

“For my Old Kentucky Home far away.”

Great! Great! Now to give Uncle Dave the greatest applause of his life! No—wait a moment—he was talking.

“My friends, that dear song of ours means more to us here in the mountains than any sentiment we have. I have heard it in every country in which it has been my fortune to travel. In a little town in France—yes—in a little hospital in that town—I saw it bring back to life our best friend—the hero we welcome home tonight. Then it was sung by that dear girl who is now his wife. For fifteen long years I have been trying to tell these two young friends of mine what is the greatest song in the world and I have often told them that some day I would sing it to them. And now as a sincere welcome home, as well to bear to them our heartiest congratulations for a long, happy, contented and successful life, we greet you here on Sunset Hill—your Sunset Hill—with this the greatest song in the world—‘My Old Kentucky Home.’

“I have proven it, too, by singing it myself, and now may you forever keep your Angelus here on Sunset Hill and may the old Hill give to you both a perfect sunset of life.”















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